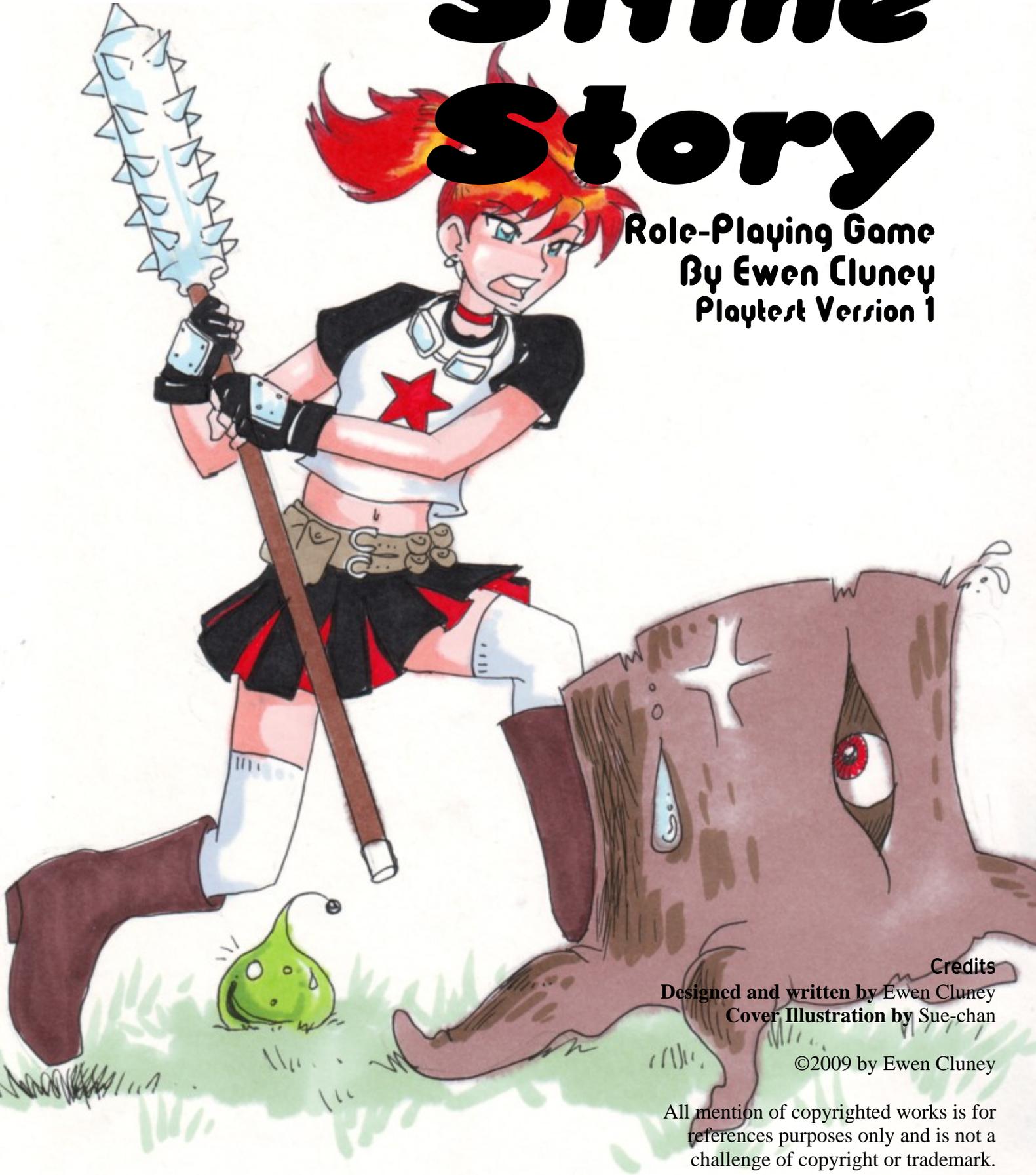


# Slime Story

Role-Playing Game  
By Ewen Cluney  
Playtest Version 1



## Credits

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## Introduction

I had the idea for the Slime Story setting while I was playing a free Korean MMORPG. My character was a girl with red pigtails, and thanks to paying for some customization, she was running around in a pleated skirt, raglan shirt, red tennis shoes, and headphones, swinging a big spiked polearm thing at cute monsters. This game is about the world I thought that girl would live in.

One-way magical portals provide a constant stream of cute monsters, and many teenagers go out and hunt those monsters. They collect parts from the monsters, and trade those in at the Monster Mart at the mall. They get exercise, spending money, and time with friends. Of course, that doesn't stop them from acting like teenagers. They make friends and sometimes enemies, they fall in or out of love, they piss off their parents, and so on. There are other things going on in the world—there are distant countries where men are fighting bloody wars over control of portals—but here and now, there are teenagers living their lives and hunting monsters to stay sane in a little town where nothing ever really happens.

## Playtest Version 1

This is my first real stab at a playable version of Slime Story. This game was a long time coming, and it has a long time to go. I came up with the original idea back in 2006, and it's taken this long for me to come up with a game. After many false starts, to my bleary eyes what I have here looks sound on paper, but I have no idea if it will really work.

This is the earliest manuscript I'm willing to show to others, and it's had neither proofreading nor playtesting. It also doesn't have all of the stuff that will be in the final version. There are a number of things that I'm not sure how to implement just yet, or that would be a huge pain to rewrite if rules revisions necessitated it. This is mainly the full set of monster writeups, plus the “experimental alchemy” rules (which I'm not sure how to approach just yet).

The major things on my mind right now:

- The selections of feats are what I managed to come up with at the very limits of what I could manage to brainstorm. They were hours of boring work, so they no doubt need to be examined closely.
- The game has an economy of Resource points. Need to make sure that actually works.
- I want the combat system to lead to more role-playing.
- I'm still working on the selection of monsters. Tentatively I want to have 46 monsters in the core book; 34 normal (of which 11 are “common”), 6 hazardous, and 6 dangerous. There needs to be a good variety of different types, forms, and elements.
- I'm wondering if there should be rules for tracking characters' relationships with their parents.
- I'm contemplating an “achievements” system. Characters would earn achievements for doing various kinds of things, which they could in turn trade in for a one-shot feat appropriate to the achievement, or just a little bit of bonus XP.
- I don't know if it'll be part of the core rules, but I'm working on a couple of random event tables to make hunters' lives more interesting.

## Role-Playing Game

*Slime Story* is a role-playing game. If you decide to play it (and I really hope you will), you'll need to get together with some friends. Through talking, scribbling on paper, and rolling dice you'll tell stories. I'll explain the rest as we go along, but if you're not familiar with these games, the "role-playing" part will need some extra explanation.

Role-playing is an activity where the participants take on the role of other people. Teachers sometimes use this to help students understand things better, or to practice certain skills (like speaking a foreign language or doing a job interview), and psychologists sometimes use role-playing as a tool to help people. Whatever the purpose of the role-play, you are pretending to be someone in a certain situation, and you can speak and act as you think they would. In the more useful kinds of role-play you may in fact be taking the part of yourself in a particular situation, but in an RPG you're taking the part of a fictional character that you create.

Different people role-play in different ways. For some it's a calculated performance, while for others it's more like slipping into another self for a little while. However you do it, you need to consider what your character is thinking and feeling, and express that through his or her words and actions. Your character's emotions and biases may lead him or her to do things that are illogical and disadvantageous. That's fine. People are irrational creatures, and the overriding goal of playing a role-playing game isn't to "win" anything, just to tell an interesting story.

One of the important differences between a role-playing game and most other kinds of role-play is that for an RPG you don't physically act out what your character is doing. Instead, you just describe it verbally, so that everyone else understands what your character is trying to do. For some things you might want to do, you'll have to engage the game rules to see if you can succeed, and what happens as a result. In *Slime Story* you mainly do that when you're in some kind of conflict with someone (or something) else.

Another important issue in any kind of role-play is of control. There are distinct limits to what you can and can't put into the fictional world you and your friends share. This is perhaps easier when you're role-playing a job interview, because unless the interviewee happens to be Superman, you can't start flying or shooting beams from your eyes. In an RPG, the fictional worlds tend to be a little more complicated than just an office where job interviews are held, so consistency is important. If you're a player of a conventional RPG, you have control over what your character thinks and does, but nothing else. You might well have a character who can fly or has heat vision, but that will be because you and your friends established his or her superhuman powers before you started playing, and not because you just happened to feel like it all of a sudden. *Slime Story* doesn't work quite like a conventional RPG, but it's different in very specific ways, which we'll explain later. If you're not sure whether your character should be able to do something, first remember that this is a game about normal teenagers. They can be talented and clever, but they're still normal humans. If that doesn't answer the question for you, try asking the people you're playing with what they think.

Finally, the most important thing to remember about role-playing games is that their purpose is to be fun. If you're not enjoying yourself, talk to your friends about why. Sometimes you need to adjust how you're doing things for your friends, and sometimes the game you're playing isn't quite right for what you want. If that happens, you and your friends can try changing how the game works or (gasp!) play some other game that works better for you.

## Required Materials

Like most role-playing games, *Slime Story* doesn't quite come with everything you need to play. The things you do need are pretty easy to come by though.

- **Six-sided dice.** These are perfectly ordinary dice, as found in some board games and other random places, though hobby stores have them in more interesting colors. Ideally, each participant should have two dice on hand.
- **Paper and pencils.** Copies of the character sheets are best for recording characters (we have PDFs on our website), but you can use normal paper. Scratch paper is handy too. Pencils are better than pens because you can erase things.
- **Friends.** In order to play this game, you definitely need a group of around three to six people who can get together for a few hours at a time. This game is at its best when you play on a regular basis, but you can play a single session if you prefer.

## Game Terms Glossary

This is a quick glossary of the jargon we use in the game. You don't need to know or even read all this stuff right now, but go ahead and flip back here if you're not sure what something means.

**attribute:** One of eight numerical traits that show how competent characters are in different areas. Each character has the attributes of Athletics, Determination, Socialization, Arcana, Dexterity, and Prowess, plus a clique attribute and a class attribute.

**check:** A die roll to see how successful a character is at something. Roll two dice and add an appropriate attribute.

**class:** An archetype that represents how a character fights monsters.

**clique:** An archetype that represents a character's place in the social order.

**concession:** A consequence (see below) where the winner asks for something to happen in the game's story. Unlike statuses, the loser of a conflict cannot be forced to take a concession.

**conflict:** A clash between two characters. They make one or more checks against each other, and the loser suffers consequences.

**connection:** Traits that represents characters' bonds to each other.

**consequences:** The loser of a conflict suffers some kind of consequences, either a concession or statuses.

**encounter:** A scene where the characters come across and (usually) fight monsters.

**feat:** A special ability or knack. Most feats are tied to a class or clique.

**Game Master (GM):** A participant in the game who serves as a referee and controls the monsters.

**Happiness:** Points obtained by increasing connections, achieving goals, and highlighting Issues, which you can then use to make your character more powerful. Essentially, "Experience Points".

**help:** Aiding another character who is making a check. One character can give another a +2 bonus, but characters after the first start having to make checks to successfully grant that bonus.

**incidental character:** A character who is neither a protagonist nor a secondary character. These are very minor background characters that have little to no role in the game.

**interlude:** A scene where the characters interact. This can be for pure role-playing, recovering from statuses, or increasing connections.

**issue:** Each protagonist has two Issues indicating things that are important to him or her. When you write up issues for your protagonist, you are saying, “I want the game to be about this.”

**participant:** Someone who is taking part in the game. A player or the Game Master.

**player:** A participant who plays the part of one protagonist and one secondary character.

**protagonist:** One of the main characters of the story. Each player creates one protagonist. The GM creates none. In this game all of the protagonists are monster hunters.

**rank:** Attributes, connections, and statuses are all measured in terms of numerical ranks.

**Resources:** A semi-abstract representation of money for the game. Costs of things in Resource points are listed as the number followed by an “R”. For example, 3R means 3 Resource points.

**result points:** When you make a check, the total of your attribute and a roll of two six-sided dice becomes your result points. Usually you’ll compare this against someone else’s result points to see who wins, but sometimes you’ll use the result points directly.

**scene:** A segment of the game where something happens. Scenes can be conflicts, interludes, encounters, or supply runs.

**secondary character:** A character that is part of the story, but not central to it. Each player creates one secondary character, and the GM creates two.

**status:** A type of consequence that gives the loser of a conflict a lasting penalty to certain kinds of checks. Statuses are divided into Tired (physical) and Upset (emotional), and taking 4 ranks of one type will incapacitate the character in that area.

# Monster Hunting

The world of *Slime Story* isn't quite like the world we live in. It's very close, but ten years ago something important happened, and certain things changed. This chapter gives you a quick overview of the *Slime Story* setting. Other parts of the book give you different bits and pieces about the setting, and your group will have to invent some new details here and there (especially with regard to the town), but this is where you should start for learning about the game's world.

## A Note on Plausibility

When it comes down to it, *Slime Story* is an unabashedly absurd setting. Everything stems from the idea that it's interesting to have teenagers hunting monsters in what is otherwise the world we live in today. It's almost on the level of *Pokemon*, where, if you think about it, you have kids wandering around unsupervised, capturing animals and setting them against each other in an endless series of cockfights. Thinking that way can take you to some interesting places, but you do need some suspension of disbelief to keep everything from falling apart. If it will make the game more interesting for you, then great! If not, the best answer to such questions is, "This is a game about teenage monster hunters. Don't worry about it."

## News of Portals

When you were little, it seemed like everything that was interesting and wondrous in the world had a way of turning out to not be real. Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, and the Tooth Fairy were only the tip of the iceberg. All the good stuff was fake, and all the real stuff was boring.

And then one day your parents were watching the news, and it said something about portals. *Magic* portals that were spitting out *real* monsters. The adults were scared. Some of them were really, really scared, and started buying guns or praying, or just got jumpy whenever something moved in the shadows. There was a lot of talking that, being so young, you didn't understand at the time. But monsters were real, and they came through magic doorways. And nothing would ever be the same again.

## In a Small Town

Ten years later, things have changed, and so have you. Not everyone is thrilled about portals, but they're a fact of life. The town where you live is small and boring, and the high school you now attend is more like a place for your parents to dump you while they work. The town isn't so small that you know everyone, but it's not so big that teenagers can avoid each other.

Some kids hang out at the mall, and some are into skateboarding, or playing guitar, or doing drugs. Everyone needs something to pass the time until they can graduate and leave the town for somewhere more interesting. For you and your friends, and a lot of others, that's monster hunting.

## Portals

When the portals first appeared, they threw the world into a panic. People feared the End Times, or an enemy attack, but however much people freaked out, the portals resolutely refused to do anything catastrophic. It's certainly *possible* that someone deliberately created the portals for some purpose, but however much monster hunters love to bullshit about it on message boards and whatnot, it's all academic. The portals are reality, and no amount of speculation has gotten anyone anywhere.

A portal appears as a disc of glowing bluish-white light that hovers in the air. An average portal is four to six feet across, though people have found portals as small as ten inches or as big as twenty feet. From a short distance it emits a low hum. Anyone foolish enough to pass through a portal will find it is totally insubstantial, but from the inside it emits a piercing, high-pitched sound. Some portals are fixed to one place, while others appear and disappear within a given area, or glide around. Some portals only dispense a monster once in a blue moon, or only spit out certain kinds of monsters, but most of them provide a good variety of monsters, and average at least one monster per 10 minutes. There's no rhyme or reason to the selection of monsters though, and they do sometimes put them into wildly inappropriate environments. There's one portal that dutifully dumps salamanders into the Antarctic, where they die within minutes.

As you might imagine, the portals appeared wherever they wanted, without much consideration for any plans people might've had. Some people had to abandon their homes to escape a continual stream of monsters into their kitchens, and similar problems afflicted factories, office buildings, villages, power plants, and so on. It's been a decade since the portals opened, so while people have largely adjusted, there are still some husks of buildings abandoned to the monsters. On the other hand, there are some cases of a portal revitalizing an area. In a few cases a ghost town has filled up again as a company set up facilities to harvest monsters from a stationary portal, and in Albuquerque an abandoned mall became the world's first indoor monster hunting park.

Science is still working on unraveling the mysteries presented by the portal phenomenon. These portals just go outside of what we presently have the ability to understand. Scientists have found that the presence of a portal slightly raises the background radiation in the area (by about 100 millisieverts), but no one really knows what that means. There are many hypotheses about what might be going on, which get into some fascinating territory in theoretical physics, but very little concrete information. It's been in the news lately that a team from Stanford wants to set up a particle accelerator to fire at a portal in the hopes that it will provide insight into how they function.

Religious reactions to the portal phenomenon vary. There were entirely too many groups that had convinced themselves that Armageddon had finally come and set about doing profoundly stupid things, but for the most part they've since calmed down. Some people are resolutely convinced that the portals are the work of Satan, but most accept them as something we just don't yet understand. There are of course a number of fringe religions based around worshiping the portals, the monsters, or some hypothetical being(s) that created them, but for the most part these have remained small and harmless.

## Monsters

Monsters often approximately resemble species native to earth—boars, cats, fish, etc.—but they display properties not found in previously known organisms, such as shooting fire or electricity. They are not especially dangerous, but people can't afford to let them go unchecked. A ten-year-old can fend off most any single monster with a rake, but he could be in real trouble if ten or twenty of the same monster showed up at once. Likewise, monsters can burn, freeze, or poison crops, kill animals, and set fire to buildings.

There are some more dangerous monsters, though fortunately they're quite rare. Encounters with manglerfish tend to be unpleasant, while encounters with dragons can turn lethal, and the appearance of an arbogeddon or meteor monster can require calling in the National Guard.

Biologists have found monsters to be a difficult but fascinating new field of study. The genetic structure of a monster is based on DNA, but there are slight differences in how the proteins are assembled that raise major questions about how these creatures might have evolved. However, it also means that monster flesh is inedible. The mechanisms by which they do things such as breathe fire or shoot electricity tend to stretch the boundaries of plausibility, but have thus far had scientifically verifiable causes.

## Monster Hunters

Neither philosophical masturbation nor scientific inquiry into the natures of portals and monsters can directly help with the question of what people need to do about these creatures invading their daily lives. People deal with monsters in different ways, depending on the area. Where there are stationary portals, they'll often fence it off and set up people and machines to harvest the monsters. In many big cities, local governments often hire public servants specifically to eliminate unwanted monsters. In other areas, especially small towns, a subculture of monster hunters has developed.

### How It Started

History records a housewife named Mary Hurst as the first monster hunter, and she was also the original inventor of the recipe for healing potions. She just fought off monsters with yard tools to protect her kids, and shared her discoveries on the internet. The practice of hunting spread like wildfire. People from every walk of life have tried their hands at it, but because nerds with decorative swords ordered out of catalogs joined the fray early on, the hobby has had a geeky tinge to it. That's probably how a lot of vocabulary from MMORPGs became common among monster hunters.

As people discovered more and more uses for monster parts, the interest in harvesting and hunting monsters grew. People started to find that nearly every monster had something useful in it somewhere, sometimes miraculously so. It was entirely too easy to figure out that the glowing orange crystals inside salamanders would explode with a sufficient impact, but people also figured out how to make the leaves from stumpies into healing potions. This is what really turned monster hunting into the phenomenon it is today. Squishies are capable of binary fission, but otherwise monsters have never been known to reproduce, so farming them isn't really possible. People learned how to use monster parts in positively miraculous ways. Hospitals, ambulances, and first-aid kits have healing potions of course, but there are also monster parts with valuable industrial applications, and some (such as dragon crystals) that are highly valuable just for their rarity. And for all of these, hunting was the only practical way to harvest them.

In some places organizations collect all the monsters from a given portal and extract the parts to sell in bulk. However, when it comes to individuals selling monster parts gained through hunting, Monster Mart was right at the center of things from the beginning.

## Monster Mart

Depending on who you ask, Monster Mart is either the Google or the Wal-Mart of monster hunting. What's certain is as a monster hunter you can hardly get away from it. Anywhere you can find a decent population of hunters, there is almost always a Monster Mart store. They can store trade-ins in special patented containers, and ship them out daily in special refrigerated trucks.

Each tiny store is also a one-stop shopping destination for pretty much everything a monster hunter might need, including weapons, potions, storage bags, backpacks, and so on. For that matter, they carry books, toys, T-shirts, and other merchandise, to help draw in non-hunters and turn kids into future hunters. Major manufacturers have caught onto this, and they supply Monster Mart with Nike branded swords and Adidas athletic wear intended for hunting.

Not everyone is happy with how Monster Mart does business, and critics say the stores have been reducing their trade-in values for monster parts more and more, taking unfair advantage of the isolation of their average customer. Furthermore, their business model is more or less based on completely dominating all of the potential business in a given area, so Monster Mart has bought out or put out of business nearly every competitor that has come along. There are only a handful of exceptions, notably a company called Monster Mania that's been focusing on small kiosks in particularly isolated locations, and the Monster Supply, which dominates the Canadian scene and has made inroads in the northern U.S.

Monster Mart's biggest virtue is probably the way it treats employees. As mall jobs that will take teenagers go, it's one of the best-paying you could get. Unfortunately, there's rumblings that changes at Monster Mart corporate may result in MM becoming as crappy as every other retailer, with lousy pay and employees being evaluated on their ability to push arbitrarily-chosen crap onto customers.

## The Monster Hunter Subculture

Monster hunters started as a mixture of random people wanting to defend their homes and random geeks wanting to do the ultimate live-action role-playing. The geeks like to think of themselves as representing the "real" form of the hobby, and they get into a lot of identity politics over what should and shouldn't be characteristics of a "true" monster hunter. It's still kind of a fringe hobby, so the people who are into it think of themselves as special. They have to put up with widespread attitude that monster hunters are wasting their time doing something that the government, or at least experienced adults, should be taking care of instead. There are also the likes of PETM who object to any killing of monsters.

## Mainstream Acceptance

The hobby is in a strange transitional phase right now, becoming sort of mainstream but not quite. It looms large to the people who are into it and follow the countless blogs, web forums, podcasts, etc. on the subject, but its mainstream traction is limited. There have been some TV shows about monster hunters, but they've mostly been short-lived and only one (*My Life as a Teenaged Monster Hunter*) became popular with actual hunters. Monster hunters actually aren't much for video games, least of all ones that are poor imitations of what they do in real life, but they do exist. An MMORPG called *MonsterQuest* is probably the most influential, and some of the terminology from the game has leaked into the real version of the hobby, most notably the tendency to call hunters who use missile weapons "rangers."

## Violence

One thing that surprises some people is the way monster hunters tend to look at violence. Not a few people have been uncomfortable at best with the idea of random teenagers carrying around weapons. There are incidents in the news from time to time, ranging from self defense to psychosis and murder, but the prevailing attitude among monster hunters is that violence against other human beings is unacceptable. Even when hunters are willing to get into the occasional fistfight, they won't use their weapons against people if they can help it. It goes without saying that game hunters with rifles know better than to point their weapons at other people, but it can be a lot more tempting to take a whack at someone with a staff or a baseball bat. Blunt trauma isn't as likely to outright kill someone as a gunshot wound, but it can too easily spiral into a concussion or a fractured skull, to say nothing of what a spiked mace can do to the human anatomy.

## The Issue of Guns

Monster hunters have a strange relationship with firearms. Using guns to hunt monsters presents some practical problems, since they're much more likely to destroy valuable monster parts. Against squishies, anything bigger than a .22 will make the monster outright explode, which looks neat on YouTube but doesn't accomplish much. Against a salamander a bullet can detonate the crystal inside. Furthermore, as most monster hunters are minors, guns are both expensive (a rifle can easily cost over \$1,000) and very tightly regulated. In areas with a very strong culture of gun ownership, people tend to think monster hunting with guns is perfectly fine, but the prevailing monster hunter subculture is largely against using firearms .

As you might imagine, this creates all kinds of friction when these different factions meet. Monster hunters and game hunters have gotten into all kinds of arguments and confrontations, especially when they get in each other's way. Some monster hunters even go so far as to look down on game hunters for killing "real" animals, even as they rack up dozens of monster kills in a single run. Monster hunters themselves get into long, convoluted arguments about the pros and cons of firearms too, but it's all gone nowhere. Basically, monster hunters aren't fans of guns, but they're far from unanimous about it. If you're hanging out with hunters and you want things to remain civil, it's a topic best avoided.

## Around the World

The United States is far from homogeneous. In the deep south there isn't anywhere near as much of a dividing line between regular hunting and monster hunting. Hunting is a way of life, and if people can earn real money rather than just venison and trophies, they're not about to complain.

The portals are a worldwide phenomenon too. Most industrialized countries have some monster hunting activity going on, though the culture can vary quite a bit. In some places it's something children do, and adults do the "real" hunting. This is the case in most Scandanavian countries, and in Japan it's split between kids and twenty-something otaku. In others the government, industry, or organized crime dominates the scene, and it's people rather than monsters that make it too dangerous for children.

The U.S. is too big and has too many portals for the government or any other organization to have any substantial control over them. In other parts of the world, portals can become another resource for people to fight over. It's not unusual for the news to carry stories of warlords fighting over portals, terrorists or guerrillas using monster parts, and other unpleasantness stemming from the portal phenomenon. On the other hand, there are third-world countries where healing potions have saved countless lives and monster parts have rescued flagging economies.

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\* This book does not have rules for guns, though if I do a supplement for this game it almost certainly will.

## Hunter Glossary

Monster hunters have their own distinct slang terms, which are a mixture of geek-talk, MMORPG terms, and new terms that have popped up as the subculture evolved. You don't have to use all of this stuff in the game. Some hunters lay on the slang much more thickly than others. The Monsters chapter (p. XX) contains all of the names of monsters, so we won't repeat them here.

**alkie (n.):** Short for "alchemist". Used for exactly the kinds of bad jokes you would expect.

**casual hunter (n.):** Someone who hunts occasionally and not very seriously. Casual hunters often use improvised weapons.

**dragonlayer (n.):** A hunter who has faced and defeated a dragon. Dragonlayers are supposed to be afforded some considerable respect, even if they've only faced a single dragon.

**mon (n.):** Short for "monster."

**party (n./v.):** A group of people who go hunting monsters together. Often used as a verb. ("Want to party Friday after school?")

**potion (n.):** A healing potion, derived from stumpy leaves. Sometimes called a "pot", which sometimes leads to unfortunate misunderstandings, and often leads to bad jokes.

**quest (n.):** A short paid job offered to monster hunters by locals, typically involving clearing out monsters from private property or recovering specific monster parts.

**run (n.):** A session of monster hunting.

**spawn (n.):** A group of monsters as they are usually encountered in the wild.

**SPM (n.):** Short for "squishies per minute". Basically, the average number of squishies a given person can take out with a given weapon. Hunters use this as the standard way to evaluate the effectiveness of people and especially weapons. Sometimes called "squee".

**squishyslayer (n.):** An insult, used to mock unskilled hunters, especially ones who try to brag. Implies they want respect for taking out a squishy.

**theorycrafting (n.):** "Theorycrafting" is basically sitting around crunching numbers about monster hunting, and a favorite pastime among the geekier monster hunters.

**zone (n.):** An area where monsters appear. An area that a portal can populate with monsters.

## Pre-Play

“Pre-play” is the stuff you need to do to get ready to play the game for the first time. Once you have all of your characters and such ready you can keep on using them, so you won’t need to do this pre-play stuff again. I think it’s best to do the pre-play stuff together sitting around a table, but you can do it over the internet or whatever ahead of time in order to jump into the actual play part more quickly if you prefer. You also might want to meet up to do the pre-play, then meet again later to start playing, so that you have some time to mull things over and brainstorm what you might want to do with your characters, but there’s definitely nothing wrong with jumping straight in.

## Participants

The most important ingredient in a good game of *Slime Story* is the people who will take part. Everyone who plays the game is called a participant. One person needs to know the rules and to be able to explain the setting to everyone else. If you’re the only one who can do that, you’re probably going to be the “Game Master.” Everyone else taking part in the game is a “player.”

### Game Master

One of the people participating in the game will have to become the Game Master, or GM. The GM’s job is to be a sort of referee and ringleader. You have to manage the rules, and get everyone to role-play and contribute. In practice the GM is often the person who organizes for everyone to get together and play.

I set up the GM’s job in this game based on the fact that I started to feel like typical GMing is too much work. You’ll need to create and run encounters and control two secondary characters, but otherwise the game progresses with everyone working equally to push things forward.

Although the GM is the final arbiter of the rules, the game belongs to everyone who’s participating, so you need to be ready and willing to listen to everyone’s opinions on things. You’re not the Voice of God, just first among equals.

### Players

The rest of the participants are “players.” That means that you don’t have the GM’s responsibilities, but you do have a protagonist and one secondary character. You get to play one of the main characters in the stories you and your friends will tell, and you have a responsibility to help make stories happen. That means that you should offer up suggestions and feedback to the group, and most important of all, have your protagonist strive and do interesting things.

## Discussion

First, you need to take some time to talk about the world where your game takes place, and what it will entail. The Setting chapter before this one gives a good overview of the *Slime Story* world, though there’s more info about it throughout the book. Get everyone on the same page as to portals, monsters, hunters, and so on.

## Themes

*Slime Story* is kind of like high school in that what you'll get out of it heavily depends on what you put into it. It can be a fluffy slice-of-life story about friends hanging out, a monster hunting soap opera, or a dark high school melodrama full of betrayals, with drug use and the occasional suicide attempt. I'm of the opinion that the game is at its best when the characters have some definite interpersonal conflicts going on without them overriding the fun atmosphere too much, but it's your game and my opinion doesn't mean all that much. Having a clear idea about this is important, since everyone is going to be making the major characters for the game together.

## Content Guidelines

*Slime Story* is about teenagers, and teenagers think about sex. A lot. A lot of people don't want to deal with such things, especially when sitting around a game table with friends, and doubly so through characters they identify with so intimately. On the other hand, some people don't mind at all. You could get fairly graphic if you're so inclined, or keep the details off-camera, or keep any romance fairly chaste, or just not deal with it at all. Talk about what you do and don't want to see in the game. Respect everyone's comfort zones, but don't wuss out either. You don't have to come to perfect consensus either, as long as it's clear what you do and don't think is okay.

## Your Town

Next, devise some details for the town where the game will take place. I like to use a town off of that desolate stretch of highway in California between the Bay Area and Los Angeles, but you can put it wherever you want. The town can be anywhere in the U.S., or in another country. The important thing is that the town has a portal that provides a supply of monsters to hunt and a Monster Mart (or similar) where hunters can trade in parts and buy supplies.

The town is important both as a backdrop and to facilitate the kinds of stories you want to tell. Your hunters could be hiking through rocky desert terrain in New Mexico, dodging through trees in New England, or tromping through swampland in Louisiana. It could be a tiny little town with nothing to do, or a decent-sized one with plenty of distractions. The local culture could be anywhere from welcoming to outright hostile towards monster hunters. It's a lot of fun to take somewhere you know from real life and make the *Slime Story* version of it, but anywhere that you find *interesting* is fine.

All of these will help you figure out what kinds of scenes the story will entail, and what kinds of characters you need. If you're in the deep South, where practically everyone hunts, monster hunters will be running into regular hunters all the time.

## Protagonists

Each player makes a primary character, called a "protagonist." These protagonists are all teenage monster hunters who live in the same town and like to go hunting together on a regular basis. There are two ways to create protagonists. Quick Creation and Construction.

*Quick Creation* means you pick out an archetype (see p. XX), add some character details, possibly tweak a few things, and get going.

*Construction* (see p. XX) means you build a character from the ground up by making various choices. It takes a little longer, but you'll get more precisely the character that you want, and you'll probably understand the nuts and bolts of things a little better.

You can make your protagonist ahead of time or at the table before you play your first session. Regardless, each player should take a turn introducing his or her protagonist, and everyone should make some brief notes about the other players' protagonists.

## Secondary Characters

Each player also makes a secondary character, and the GM makes two secondary characters. Secondary characters are not the main focus of the story, so we don't bother with quite so many rules for them. You should give your secondary characters names, personalities, and especially connections to the protagonists, but in terms of rules we keep things simpler.

As with protagonists, go around the table introducing the secondary characters you've created, and make a note about each one.

Note that although they do not take part in the story per se, you can include incidental characters (see p. XX) in the game wherever appropriate.

## Write Issues

All of the characters in the game have what we call "issues". An issue is something in life that bothers the character, something that will spur him or her to action. Protagonists have two issues, while secondary characters have only one. You can do these in any order you want, but you should do them as a group.

Protagonists can afford to have one issue that doesn't involve others ("I want to save up to buy a car") but otherwise you should try to have your issues point towards other characters as much as possible. This doesn't have to lead to vicious, desperate conflicts ("I hate Kyle for stealing my girlfriend"), but it should lead to something happening in the game. Likewise, if someone announces an issue that you think can lead to stuff with one of your characters, make a note of it, and consider giving that character an issue that will point back at them. In a sense, your protagonist's Issues are a way of explicitly telling the other participants that you want the game to have scenes about a certain thing. As a rule, protagonists should be active and secondary characters should play to them rather than each other.

You can make an issue specific to a particular character ("I'm head-over-heels in love with Rita"), but think about what it will mean for the game, especially if you're not sure that everyone will be able to attend the game consistently. Being obsessed with Rita would be hard to do much with if Rita isn't showing up. However, once you start playing you'll be writing a goal for your protagonist, which can very easily be related to a specific character.

Below are some examples of issues, but this is a very important part of your monster hunter, so you should give it a little more thought than just picking from a list.

- I want a girlfriend.
- I hate being poor, especially when most of my friends aren't.
- My life is going nowhere.
- No one respects me.
- No one understands me.
- I wish I could tell people that I'm gay.
- I need real friends.
- I absolutely love high-tech gadgets.
- I really want to get laid.
- I'm fat, and I hate it when people make fun of me for it.
- Everything seems pointless.
- I want to be more popular.
- I wish my parents wouldn't give me a hard time about having too many white friends.

## Initialize Connections

Connections are special traits that represent the bonds between people. If you have a strong connection to someone, you're better able to influence them, but they're also better able to influence you. A connection is one thing that two characters share, so if it goes up or down, it does so for both of you. The ranks of connections are as follows:

Rank	Description	Notes
-1	Stranger	Someone you've never met.
0	Acquaintance	Someone you know but aren't too close to.
1	Casual	A friend you can hang out with.
2		A family member you're on speaking terms with.
3	Close	A friend you can talk about your problems with.
4		A close family member. A significant other.
5	Deep	A friend who knows you better than you know yourself.
6		A lover who you might marry some day.

Protagonists and secondary characters are all at least acquaintances with each other; only incidental characters (see p. XX) are considered strangers.

If you're using the actual character sheets, you'll notice that your list of characters also has spaces for connections and their ranks. To start with, all of the protagonists have Rank 1 (Casual) connections to each other. They're friends, and they like each other at least enough to hang out and go hunting together. Secondary characters all have Rank 0 (Acquaintance) connections to everyone else.

Now comes the interesting part. Each participant gets free connection ranks equal to the number of participants. You can place these on either of your characters' connections to any other characters. You have to announce this to the group, and the recipient has to agree, but otherwise you can tackle this however you want.

Once that's done, write a description of the nature of your characters' connections. This isn't important for the game mechanics, just for you and everyone else participating to have some idea what's going on. A rank 3 connection could mean you have a one-sided crush on a girl who you're otherwise friends with, or that you look up to a fellow hunter, or that you like hanging out with your kid brother, or you respect someone as a rival, or any of a million other things.

You can change the ranks of your connections later on through Connection Interludes (see p. XX).

## Adding New Characters

Sometimes over the course of the game you might wind up shuffling around the selection of secondary characters or even protagonists.

If you want to “promote” a monster hunter secondary character to a protagonist, just fill out the character with the remaining details (feats, issues, gear) as per a starting character.

If you want to introduce a new character from scratch, you can first create the character as usual, then make adjustments as follows:

- If the character theoretically knows people in the area, he or she can initialize connections like a starting character.
- If the character is new to town and doesn't know anyone, he or she gets only one free connection rank, and otherwise has a rank 0 (Acquaintance) connection with everyone else.

New protagonists get 4 Happiness per session played previously to improve attributes and buy feats.

## Quick Creation

Quick creation is where you make a protagonist by picking out an archetype and adding/tweaking some personal details. We've included six archetypes, which include one example of each class and clique.

For detailed explanations of what all of the stuff here means, see the Traits chapter (p. XX).

## Customization

You can tweak your protagonist a little bit if you wish.

- **Attributes:** Each archetype has two attributes in parentheses; these have a discretionary rank on them, and you can move one rank from them to any other attribute you wish, so long as you only put one discretionary rank on a given attribute.
- **Feats:** You can also swap feats, so long as your protagonist still has one each of Enhancement, At-Will, Scene, and Episode feats, and one each from his or her class and clique.
- **Gear:** Starting character can have up to 6R worth of gear. If you don't like what the archetype has by default, you can go in and fiddle with stuff. See p. XX for an assortment of gear.
- **Issues:** You normally write new issues together with the other participants, and make them relate to other characters. The ones included here are just examples to help you get started, and I highly recommend coming up with new ones unless you're really short on time.

## Archetypes

### Dedicated Archer

*"Monster hunting is a great way to keep in shape, and it's way more exciting than the track team."*

You put a lot of energy into being on the school's archery team. You're not the best there is, but you've placed in some championships here and there. However, at a certain point you got tired of just shooting at paper targets. Moving targets give you a better challenge, and fighting monsters lets you exercise your legs and get some spending money.

**Clique:** Jock

**Class:** Ranger

**Attributes:** Athletics (9), Determination 6, Socialization 6, Arcana 6, Dexterity (9), Prowess 5, Jock 7, Archer 5

**Feats:** Bullseye, Careful Shot, Favored Ranged Weapon (Bow), Second Wind

**Gear:** Compound Bow (Standard Missile Weapon), 2 Healing Potions

**Issues:** My other friends give me a hard time for hanging out with monster nerds. I need to save up for college or my parents will disown me.

### Joe (Jane) Hunter

*"Hey, what else am I going to do in this boring town?"*

You're not the guy (or girl) that everyone pays attention to, but no one minds having you around either. You're not sure what you want out of life, but hunting monsters is definitely better than being bored or doing drugs. You get plenty of exercise, you make money, and you've made some good friends.

**Clique:** Average

**Class:** Fighter

**Attributes:** Athletics 7, Determination (7), Socialization 7, Arcana (8), Dexterity 5, Prowess (9), Average 5, Fighter 7

**Feats:** Helper, Likable, Powerful Blow, Whirlwind Attack

**Issues:** I want a girlfriend/boyfriend. I want to save up to buy a car.

**Gear:** Longsword (Standard Melee Weapon), 2 Healing Potions, 12-pack of Slime Cola

### Karate Star

*“I won my division at the last Tae Kwon Do tournament, but monster hunting is where the real challenge is.”*

Taking martial arts classes was your parents’ idea originally, but you stuck with it, and got really good at it. People respect you for it, and combined with your natural charisma, you’re more than a little successful with the opposite sex. Still, as happy as you were to win some trophies, there’s something unsatisfying about martial arts tournaments decided by points instead of actual hits. You used to roll your eyes at the nerds who went around hunting monsters all the time, but then you realized that monsters are something you can beat up without any repercussions. It turns out that those monster nerds are actually cool people, and your skills are getting sharper than ever.

**Clique:** Popular

**Class:** Monk

**Attributes:** Athletics 8, Determination 8, Socialization (8), Arcana 5, Dexterity 6, Prowess (8), Popular 7, Monk 5

**Feats:** Come On Guys!, Dashing Attack, Interrupt Attack, Never Unarmed

**Gear:** 3 Healing Potions

**Issues:** I want to find a boyfriend/girlfriend with some actual substance. No one really understands me.

### Monster Lover

*“I call this one Slimy! Isn’t he cute?”*

You got interested in monsters not because it’s fun to kill them, but because you like the monsters themselves. With much practice, you’ve learned how to handle a monster without fighting it. It takes a lot of practice, but you can actually train a monster to be a loyal pet that will fight alongside you. On the other hand, you’re much better with monsters than people. That doesn’t necessarily mean you dislike dealing with people, but it doesn’t come to you naturally.

**Clique:** Weirdo

**Class:** Monster Tamer

**Attributes:** Athletics 7, Determination (9), Socialization 4, Arcana 7, Dexterity 7, Prowess 7, Weirdo 5, Monster Tamer (8)

**Feats:** Nowhere To Be Found, Nurse Monster, Pet Monster\*, Secret World

**Issues:** I can never tell people who I really feed. People think I’m strange for talking to monsters.

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\* Monster Tamer character *must* have the Pet Monster feat, so you cannot swap this one for another.

## Monstercancer

*“Most people just use the crystals from salamanders, but the pharynx contains special glands that contain a highly flammable fuel. It’s tricky to extract, but it’s worth a lot if you do... like so!”*

For you, dealing with monsters is more an intellectual challenge than a physical one. Monsters—and especially the awesome parts you get out of them—are like a puzzle to solve. If you use your head, you can take a monster apart, even if it’s still alive, and put the parts to good use. Your friends tend to make themselves useful by beating the crap out of monsters, but when it comes to the end goal of making money, you’re more helpful than any of them.

**Clique:** Geek

**Class:** Alchemist

**Attributes:** Athletics 4, Determination (8), Socialization 4, Arcana 10, Dexterity 9, Prowess 5, Geek 5, Alchemist (8)

**Feats:** Brew Potion, Monster Encyclopedia, Portal Tracking, Quaff

**Gear:** Alchemy Kit, Improvised Melee Weapon (Shovel), 2 Healing Potions

**Issues:** I’m not sure my friends actually respect me. I spend way too much money on gadgets.

## Suburban Ninja

*“I’m a ninja. I can flip out and kill people whenever I want.”*

When you were little, you had a knack for getting into places you weren’t supposed to, and pulling off some really elaborate pranks. Other monster hunters are all about hitting things with swords or arrows or whatever, but why play fair? They’re *monsters*. You set traps, you sneak up on them from behind, and you take them out before they even know what’s going on. Sure, you might steal a few more kills than your friends would like, but it’s their fault for being so slow.

**Clique:** Punk

**Class:** Ninja

**Attributes:** Athletics 8, Determination 8, Socialization 6, Arcana 6, Dexterity (8), Prowess 7, Punk 5, Ninja (8)

**Feats:** Ambush, I’m So Punk, Music, What Just Happened?

**Gear:** Small Melee Weapon (Ninja Sword), Standard Missile Weapon (Throwing Daggers), 1 Healing Potion

**Issues:** One day my friends will understand the genius of the Ramones.

## Personal Data

With the simple game stuff out of the way, it’s time to add something of a spark of life to your protagonist. See p. XX for some advice.

# Protagonist Construction

To create a protagonist from scratch, follow the steps below.

## 1. Select Clique

A clique is an archetype of where you are in the social order. This in turn helps determine your attributes and what feats you can choose from. Below is a quick list of the various cliques; see p. XX for more detailed descriptions.

- **Average:** You're an ordinary guy (or girl) that no one objects to. You're good at getting along with people.
- **Geek:** You're a nerd who prizes obscure information. You know a lot about monsters and such.
- **Jock:** You're focused on physical stuff, and probably an athlete. You don't have to be a big stereotypical football-playing troglodyte, just very athletic.
- **Popular:** You're one of the popular kids, and you know how to navigate social circles.
- **Punk:** You're pretty sociable, but you're only at your best within a fringe subculture. You can be independent, but you also can draw strength from others.
- **Weirdo:** You're kind of strange and you don't know how to deal with people, but there's a lot going on in your head.

## 2. Select Class

Your class is an expression of how your character goes about fighting monsters. This isn't the kind of game where you need to worry about having a well-balanced party, but on the other having, for example, nothing but alchemists would make things difficult. Below is a quick list of the various classes; see p. XX for more detailed descriptions.

- **Alchemist:** You're very good at collecting monster parts and you can make stuff with them.
- **Fighter:** You fight by swinging a sword or other melee weapon. It's a simple way to fight, but it's not as easy as it looks.
- **Monk:** You've adapted your martial arts training to let you fight monsters with your bare hands.
- **Monster Tamer:** Although it's very difficult, you have learned how to coax and even tame monsters. You might have a few trained pet monsters you can send out to fight for you.
- **Ninja:** You fight using sneak attacks and guile. You have to be athletic and capable to pull this off.
- **Ranger:** You fight using a bow and arrows, or some other ranged weapon. Fighting from a distance keeps you safer, but you can't handle yourself as well if something gets too close.

### 3. Attributes

Attributes are a series of numerical values that show how competent your character is at certain things. When you use an attribute during play, you roll two six-sided dice, and add your attribute rank, usually to get higher than someone else who is doing the same.

Your class and clique double as special attributes. You get one at a rank of 7 and the other at 5; you choose which is which. See the class/clique descriptions (p. XX) to find out what each one is good for.

The ranks of your other attributes depend on your class and clique; look at the table below, and add together the numbers from each. After that, you can add one extra point each to two different attributes (three if your clique is Average), though they can't go any higher than 12, ever.

- **Athletics** represents your physical finesse and stamina.
- **Determination** refers to the strength of your will, your bloody-minded determination to have your way or at least not let other people push you around.
- **Socialization** is your ability to deal with people, in terms of navigating social circles and building relationships.
- **Arcana** is your knowledge of obscure details. This includes knowing about monsters in detail, but also things like science, technology, and even sci-fi TV shows.
- **Dexterity** refers to your coordination and manual dexterity. You'll most often use it for ranged combat (both attacking and defending), but it's also good for doing careful, intricate work.
- **Prowess** is your ability to handle yourself up close and personal. You'll most often use it for close combat (both attacking and defending), but it's also good for feats of brute strength.

Class	Athletics	Determination	Socialization	Arcana	Dexterity	Prowess
Alchemist	2	4	2	5	5	2
Fighter	4	3	3	4	2	5
Monk	4	4	2	3	3	4
Monster Tamer	4	4	2	5	2	3
Ninja	5	3	2	3	4	4
Ranger	3	3	3	4	5	2
Clique	Athletics	Determination	Socialization	Arcana	Dexterity	Prowess
Average	3	3	4	3	3	3
Geek	2	3	2	5	4	3
Jock	5	3	3	2	3	3
Popular	3	4	5	2	3	3
Punk	3	4	4	3	3	3
Weirdo	3	4	2	4	3	3

### 3A. Defenses

There are two ratings you need to calculate from your character's attributes: Close Defense and Ranged Defense. These are the numbers an attacker has to exceed to harm your character with a normal close or ranged attack. Close Defense is Prowess+7, and Ranged Defense is Dexterity+7.

## 4. Feats

Feats are special abilities that help you in various ways. There are four categories of feats: Enhancement, At-Will, Scene, and Episode. Pick one of each type. You must have at least one each from your class and clique. Also, Monster Tamers must take the Pet Monster feat.

See p. XX for descriptions of feats.

## 5. Happiness

“Happiness” points are a measure of the general positive energy of your life that drives personal growth. You start out zero Happiness points, but you should earn more over the course of each session. Your current Happiness total isn’t a barometer for how happy your protagonist is, just experience points to spend on improving your character between episodes; see p. XX for more details.

## 6. Resources and Gear

Protagonists start with 6 Resources, unless they have some kind of Feat that says otherwise. You can use as much or as little as you want to buy gear for monster hunting. I recommend getting one good weapon, and one or two healing items, but some classes and cliques practically demand buying certain extra things. Look at the Gear section (p. XX) to see what you can buy.

## 7. Personal Data

“Personal data” is what we call further details about who your hunter is. Although for this game we assume that hunters are high school students, they can be male or female, and they can be of any race and pretty much any background. America’s neat that way. If you have the time and inclination you can go ahead and write a detailed biography for your character, but it’s enough to give him or her a name and establish what he or she is like in broad strokes. Most people need some time to get to know their characters as the game progresses.

**Name:** Give your protagonist a name. In present-day America people can be from just about anywhere, so I won’t tell you what kinds of names you can and can’t have. Just make sure it makes sense for your protagonist, and aim for something you fellow participants can easily remember and say. If you’re stumped for a name, ask your friends for ideas, or use an online resource like the Story Games Names Project or Seventh Sanctum.

**Looks:** What does your protagonist look like? Concentrate on details that stand out. No one cares that your character weighs 137 pounds, but you might write down “skinny” or “fat” if it’s important to how he or she looks. Here are some things you might include in describing your protagonist’s looks:

- Always dresses in athletic wear.
- Ice-blue eyes.
- Has a nice figure and wears tight jeans and camisoles to show it off.
- Vivid red hair.
- Always has an iPod with the white earbuds.
- Wears T-shirts from nerdy webcomics.
- Wears a denim jacket with patches of different punk bands.
- Wears emo glasses.
- Tall and scrawny.
- Short hair dyed bright blue.
- Shaved head.

**Personality:** Your class and clique should help point towards what your protagonist's personality is like, but there's still an awful lot of room for interpretation and creativity. For example, geeks are introverted and into collecting arcane knowledge, useful or otherwise, but if you make a Geek character, you still have a whole lot of possibilities. Is your character shy, chatty, annoying, whiny, witty, stubborn, easy-going, cheerful? As with looks, just write some stuff in broad strokes to get you going.

# Traits

This chapter has detailed descriptions of the various traits that characters can have.

## Cliques

Your character's clique represents where he or she falls in the social order. Each clique description lists some concepts (quick character ideas), a description of what you can use the clique attribute for, and the ranks it contributes to your attributes at character creation.

### Average

Joe (or Jane) Average is someone that no one objects to, yet no one is especially excited about. They tend to be the people who fade into the background or adapt to whatever group they're in, and can wind up taking a leadership role seemingly by accident. Average is the most balanced and adaptable of the cliques.

**Concepts:** Bland, Social Chameleon, Reluctant Leader

**Clique Attribute:** Calming people down, dumb luck, not standing out

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 3, Determination 3, Socialization 4, Arcana 3, Dexterity 3, Prowess 3 (Average characters also get one extra attribute rank to assign as they wish.)

### Geek

In many places it was geeks who all but created the monster hunting hobby, to the point where it still comes off as a somewhat geeky pastime. Geeks usually aren't as physically oriented, but they tend to have a positively obsessive level of knowledge.

**Concepts:** Gamer Blogger, Monster Encyclopedia, Scientist, Gamer

**Clique Attribute:** Knowing trivia, working with technology

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 2, Determination 3, Socialization 2, Arcana 5, Dexterity 4, Prowess 3

### Jock

Although monster hunting attracts lots of nerds, there are jocks who're into it too. A character with the "jock" clique doesn't have to be a stereotypical football-playing troglodyte, just someone who's focused on the physical over the mental.

**Concepts:** Player, Bully, Track Star, Karate Student

**Clique Attribute:** Intimidation, sports, stamina

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 5, Determination 3, Socialization 3, Arcana 2, Dexterity 3, Prowess 3

### Popular

The popular kids don't usually bother with monster hunting, but there are those who do, whether to help keep up an expensive lifestyle, a guilty pleasure, or to take part of the only real action in town. Popular kids know better than the rest how to look cool and deal with social situations.

**Concepts:** Drama Queen, Rich Kid, Mr./Miss Perfect, Stuck-up cheerleader

**Clique Attribute:** Connections, fashion, popularity

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 3, Determination 4, Socialization 5, Arcana 2, Dexterity 3, Prowess 3

## Punk

This clique is kind of a catch-all for people who connect to a subculture. Punk rockers are probably the most prominent example in SoCal, but skaters, metalheads, goths, hip-hoppers, etc. can all fall under this clique.

**Concepts:** Anarchist, Artist, Metalhead, Rocker, Hip-Hopper, Musician, Goth

**Clique Attribute:** Being bold, connections, drawing attention to yourself

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 3, Determination 4, Socialization 4, Arcana 3, Dexterity 3, Prowess 3

## Weirdo

“Weirdos” are like Geeks taken to the next level, the quiet kids who have serious trouble dealing with people, but can have some really incredible stuff going on inside their heads.

**Concepts:** Bookworm, Hippie, Emo, Outcast, Poet, The Quiet One

**Clique Attribute:** Fading into the background, pushing people away, standing alone

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 3, Determination 4, Socialization 2, Arcana 4, Dexterity 3, Prowess 3

## Classes

### Alchemist

Alchemists are monster hunters who’ve taken the time to learn how to work with monster parts themselves, rather than relying on the professionals at Monster Mart. This means that given enough time and the right materials, they can do things like brew healing potions for cheaper than they’re sold in stores. However, they do in fact know how to make themselves useful in a fight, as they can deliver offensive and defensive items with much greater accuracy than most.

**Concepts:** Anarchist Cook, Chemist, Pyromaniac

**Class Attribute:** Extracting/handling monster parts, making items, knowing monster anatomy

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 2, Determination 4, Socialization 2, Arcana 5, Dexterity 5, Prowess 2

### Fighter

Fighters are the most common type of monster hunter. They mainly get up close and personal using melee weapons of one sort or another. A lot of them use swords, but as manufacturers have tried to produce more and more different kinds of weapons, it’s become a hobby in itself for fighters to debate the relative merits of different kinds of melee weapons. This is the easiest form of fighting to get into, but it’s much harder to master than people realize.

**Concepts:** Big Bruiser, Fencer, Swashbuckler, Swordsman

**Class Attribute:** Sizing up enemies, stamina

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 4, Determination 3, Socialization 3, Arcana 4, Dexterity 2, Prowess 5

## Monk

Monks, as they are jokingly called, are the rare monster hunters who use martial arts skills to fight monsters bare-handed. Lots of people have taken some martial arts classes, but it takes a fair amount of skill to hit hard enough to be an effective monster hunter, plus the rules are a bit different when it comes to non-human anatomy.

**Concepts:** Dedicated Disciple, Hereditary Martial Artist, Karate Star

**Class Attribute:** Concentration, mental discipline

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 4, Determination 4, Socialization 2, Arcana 3, Dexterity 3, Prowess 4

## Monster Tamer

Monster tamers are a rare breed who can tame and use monsters to hunt more monsters. This is a difficult and at times rather dangerous hobby, since it involves getting and staying very close to what are ordinarily hostile creatures.

**Concepts:** Monster Lover, Monster Rancher

**Class Attribute:** Calming monsters, good with animals, knowing about monsters

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 4, Determination 4, Socialization 2, Arcana 3, Dexterity 2, Prowess 3

## Ninja

Ninjas are what people call monster hunters who use stealth and ambushes to get the job done.

**Concepts:** Ninja Fanboy, Suburban Commando

**Class Attribute:** Hiding, scouting for monsters, setting traps, sneaking

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 5, Determination 3, Socialization 2, Arcana 3, Dexterity 4, Prowess 4

## Ranger

Rangers are monster hunters who use ranged weapons. Tolkien fans are not happy about this terminology, but it's what caught on. Most monster hunters consider firearms as something of a taboo (as they're more likely to destroy valuable monster parts) except in areas with exceedingly dangerous monsters, so rangers mainly use bows, and sometimes things like throwing knives or slings. They have the advantage of staying out of the fray, but the cost of arrows can add up after a while.

**Concepts:** Archery champion, Bowman, Knife Thrower, Legolas wannabe

**Class Attribute:** Archery, agility, spotting things

**Attribute Bonuses:** Athletics 3, Determination 3, Socialization 3, Arcana 4, Dexterity 5, Prowess 2

## Feats

There are four types of feats, and each class and clique as some of each:

- **Enhancement** feats permanently make your character better at something. This can improve an attribute, or give you a bonus to a specific type of roll.
- **At-Will** feats can be used (within reason) whenever you wish.
- **Scene** feats can only be used once per scene (Encounter or Interlude).
- **Episode** feats can only be used once per episode.

You might be wondering why it is your character can only pull off a certain stunt once per scene or episode. This is a meta-game conceit, by which I mean the rules are that way because they work really well as game rules. A Scene or Episode feat is something a protagonist can only pull off every so often, through an unusual bit of luck, focus, exertion, or whatever. Your protagonist isn't thinking "I can only use Berserker Attack once this episode!" He's just only going to get that crazy at most once, because it takes a lot out of him.

## General

**Generous Allowance (Episode):** Your parents are pretty generous with your allowance. Each episode you get 1R for free.

**Overprotective Parents (Enhancement):** Your parents are a bit overprotective. They grudgingly allow you to hunt monsters, but only if you wear protective gear. You receive light or heavy armor (your choice) for free, but you'll get in trouble with your parents if they find out you're hunting without wearing it.

**People Person (Enhancement):** You're good at dealing with people, and you're more connected to the people around you than most. You start with two extra connection ranks to assign. You can only take this feat when creating your protagonist.

## Alchemist

**Administer (Scene):** You are good at administering healing items, so that you can get your friends to drink healing potions and such even if they're unconscious.

**Bomb Blitz (Episode):** You can make an epic attack with offensive monster parts. Make a Dexterity-based attack with two to five offensive monster parts you have on hand. Make one roll, with a +2 bonus, plus 1 per part after the second. If it hits, each one does full damage to one target.

**Brew Potion (Scene):** It takes a lot of practice to get it just right, but you've mastered the art of making healing potions. If you have a stumpy leaf and 1R worth of materials, you can make a class attribute roll, and produce one potion per 4 result points.

**Careful Extraction (Enhancement):** You're especially good at pulling salable parts out of monsters. When you extract parts, you can add +1 to the die roll to see what parts you get. You can take this feat multiple times for a cumulative bonus.

**Experimental Alchemy (Special):** This is a special feat that lets you attempt to create all kinds of things while working with monster parts. It vastly opens up the range of things that an alchemist character can make, but also makes their craft a bit more involved. Thus, expanded alchemy is optional, and you should discuss with the group whether or not to include it in the game. See p. XX for the full Experimental Alchemy rules.

**Extra Extraction (At-Will):** Your detailed knowledge of monster anatomy lets you pull out some

extra stuff from them that most people wouldn't be able to locate. Every time you extract monster parts, make a class attribute roll, and keep track of how many successes you get total. For every 6 result points, you get 1R worth of extra monster parts.

**Quaff (At-Will):** You have a somewhat disturbing knack for downing potions and such instantly. You can drink a healing potion, slime cola, or similar item without using an action. It's fun at parties too.

**Use Parts (Enhancement):** You've got a certain knack for using items in battle. You can use your alchemist class attribute to attack with items, with a special +1 bonus.

**Weak Point (Scene):** Your intimate knowledge of monster anatomy (you spend a lot of time taking them apart, after all) makes it easier for you to find their weaknesses. You get a special +2 bonus to tactical actions based on taking advantage of monsters' weaknesses.

**Weapon Upgrade (Episode):** You know enough about working with metal and such that you can fix up weapons to be more effective. To use this successfully you need to make a class attribute check with a result of at least 12, plus the value of the weapon in Resources. If you succeed, you can give a weapon the Quality modifier using 1R of materials.

## Average

**Dude, That's Messed Up (Scene):** If someone is engaged in a conflict to do something objectionable, you can step in and stop it. If two people with whom you have connections of rank 2 or higher are in a conflict, you can use this feat to attempt to halt that conflict with no consequences assigned. To do this, one side of the conflict has to want you to make it end, and you have to beat the other's result points with a class attribute check (with the higher of your connection ranks to the two of them added).

**Dumb Luck (Episode):** Once per episode you can have a spate of dumb luck that saves you from trouble. When you've just failed a check, using this feat lets you re-roll and add a d6 to your total.

**Go-Between (Scene):** You have a certain knack for getting people together. You can use this feat when two friends with whom you have a connection of rank 2 or higher are trying to increase their connection rank during an interlude, but not when they're trying to raise it to rank 6. If you use this feat, add 1d6 plus the higher of your connection ranks with them to their connection raising roll. This counts as an active action.

**Helper (At-Will):** You're particularly good at helping people out with things, whatever they happen to be. If you need to roll to try to help someone, add +3 to that check. When you successfully help someone with a check, you add +3 instead of +2 to their result.

**Likable (Enhancement):** There's something about you that people naturally tend to like. Reduce the required result for improving your connections by 3 points.

**Mood Maker (Enhancement):** Your presence can put people at ease. While you're present, spending a point of Strain only causes a -1 penalty.

**Social Chameleon (Episode):** Once per episode you can imitate an At-Will or Scene clique feat possessed by another protagonist with whom you have a connection of rank 2 or higher.

**Someone You Can Talk To (At-Will):** You're good at listening to people's problems and calming them down. When you assist someone recovering from Upset status, add +4 to your roll.

## Fighter

**Berserk Attack (Episode):** This feat lets you deliver a flurry of angry blows against the monsters.

Make an Attack (or Clash) like usual, and if you're successful, you cause 3 extra hits.

**Favored Melee Weapon (Enhancement):** Pick one specific type of melee weapon (sword, axe, pole arm, staff, etc.). Any time you're wielding that type of weapon, add +1 to rolls to attack or clash.

**Fighting Stamina (Enhancement):** Whatever it is you usually do, jumping in and fighting monsters with a melee weapon has made you more fit than you would ordinarily be. +1 to your Athletics attribute.

**Powerful Blow (Scene):** When the time is right, you deliver a powerful strike. Add +1 to the hits caused by a successful attack or clash.

**Standing Tall (Enhancement):** If you are forced into Off-Balance footing, the penalties are only -1 each to Attack and Defense.

**Trip (At-Will):** By making a calculated attack, you can throw an opponent off their footing. You can force an opponent into Off-Balance footing instead of doing damage with a successful normal attack or clash.

**Whirlwind Attack (Episode):** You jump into the fray and deliver a series of quick attacks. Make one attack roll. You can target up to three monsters normally, and you can target more by taking a -1 penalty for each monster after the third. For each monster where your attack result exceeds its Close Defense, that creature takes damage as usual.

**You're Fighting Me (At-Will):** You can doggedly stick to a single monster, and punish it for putting its attention on anyone else. Declare that you're using this feat when you attack or clash with a monster. If it attacks someone other than you, it gets a -3 penalty to the attack, and you get to make a free attack against it.

## Geek

**A Perfect Plan (Episode):** You know how to plan out battles in advance based on the situation. Someone in your group must successfully scout out the group of monsters you're going to confront, and you need to explain some kind of plan to your fellow hunters. Using this power gives everyone on your side a +1 bonus to attacks, clashes, and defenses for the duration of the encounter.

**Armchair General (Scene):** You have a certain knack for tactics, and you can help your friends do better in battle. Once per encounter, one other character can add half (rounded down) your class attribute rank to a tactical action roll.

**Blunt (At-Will):** Being delicate is not your strong point. When you spend someone's point of Strain they take a -3 penalty instead of -2.

**Combat Theory (Scene):** You've spent a lot of time studying how combat works, and once in a while you can even put that knowledge to good use. Once per encounter you can add half (rounded down) your class attribute to an attack (but not clash) check.

**Monster Encyclopedia (Enhancement):** You are especially knowledgeable about monsters. Add +3 to Arcana checks made against monsters' Obscurity ratings.

**Portal Tracking (Episode):** You've been tracking the locations of the local portal and what it spits out. Once per episode, you can choose what kind of monsters the group encounters.

**Total Geek (Enhancement):** You're geeky even by geek standards, and you possess endless arcane knowledge. Add +1 to your Arcana attribute.

**Trivia (At-Will):** When dealing with another character who has an Arcana attribute of rank 8 or higher, you can use your Arcana in place of Socialization if they allow you to.

## Jock

**Adrenaline Surge (At-Will):** Although it can wear you out afterwards, you can summon up a major burst of adrenaline to pull off something crazy. You can take one rank of Tired status to add a +5 bonus to one Prowess or Athletics check.

**Big Bruiser (Enhancement):** You're big and strong, and you know how to hurt things. If you are a Fighter, you may take this feat to add a special +1 bonus to your Fighter class attribute.

**Bully (Scene):** You're entirely too good at brow-beating and bullying people. Any time you win a social conflict, you can also cause a point of Strain. If your opponent is already taking Strain from the conflict, you can trade 2 points of Strain for an extra rank of Upset status.

**Intimidate (At-Will):** Add +1 to checks made for conflicts where you are intimidating others.

**Second Wind (Episode):** Once per episode, you can remove 3 ranks of Tired status on your turn without using an action.

**Sports Hero (Episode):** You are liked among (many) of the people around town for being an important part of one of your school's major sports teams. Once per episode you can make an Athletics check to represent your performance in the team's most recent game and add one third of your result to a social check or conflict.

**Stubborn Mule (Scene):** You really know how to dig in your heels and not be swayed. If someone is using a conflict to persuade you of something, you can take a point of Strain to cancel the conflict with no consequences assigned.

**Track Star (Enhancement):** You can run fast. Add +4 to attempts to flee, and any other checks where running speed is relevant.

## Monk

**Dashing Attack (At-Will):** During an encounter you can move to Forward footing and make an Attack with a +1 bonus to the check in one turn. You must be in Middle or Rear footing to use this feat.

**Grappler (Enhancement):** You are sufficiently skilled in grappling techniques that you have total +1 bonus to attacks made while Off-Balance (but you still take the usual penalty to defenses).

**Hurricane Attack (Episode):** You can unleash a flurry of attacks and hit several different targets at once. Make a Monk class attribute check. For every 5 result points, make one additional attack or clash in one turn.

**Intercept (Scene):** When the timing is just right, you can see an attack coming and stop it. You must have an unused action to use this feat. When a monster is attacking an ally, you can change it into a clash between yourself and that monster. If the monster wins, you take damage as usual, but regardless your ally is undamaged.

**Kippup (At-Will):** On your turn you can move from Off-Balance to any normal footing without using your action.

**Never Unarmed (Enhancement):** Your fists and feet are powerful enough that for all intents and purposes you're never truly unarmed. Your unarmed attacks cause 2 hits.

**Shattering Blow (Episode):** You can deliver a powerful blow that permanently reduces a target's defenses. Make a basic attack or clash; if it succeeds, you cause only 1 hit, but the target's Close and Ranged Defenses are reduced by 2 points.

**Vital Point (Scene):** Monks have to study monster anatomy carefully to apply their skills to such different organisms, and you are even better at this than most. Once per scene you can make an

unarmed attack or clash using your Monk class attribute instead of Prowess, and if successful it causes an extra hit.

## Monster Tamer

**Calm Monster (At-Will):** You've worked with monsters enough that you have a certain knack for calming them down. You can make a class attribute check, and if you can beat the monster's Cunning rating, you calm it down and it won't attack during its next turn unless it gets attacked.

**Hounding Pet (Episode):** You can send your pet monster to pursue a target and keep it from acting. Pick one target; your monster automatically clashes with that target every time it attacks, with a +2 bonus to its checks.

**Monster Encyclopedia (Enhancement):** Same as the Geek feat.

**Nurse Monster (At-Will):** You're very good at treating injured monsters. You can use your Monster Tamer class attribute, with a +2 bonus, to assist monsters in recovering from Tired status.

**Pet Frenzy (Episode):** Every now and then a pet monster will lose it and really latch onto an enemy. When your monster has made a successful attack or clash, you can have it do an additional 2 hits.

**Pet Monster (Enhancement):** If you're going to make a monster tamer character, you need this feat. By taking it, your protagonist has a monster that he or she has managed to tame enough to get it to help out in encounters, which is a considerable accomplishment. Pick a common or uncommon monster from the book with a Hits rating of up to half (round down) of your Monster Tamer class attribute. You can have it attack instead of yourself by using your action. If your pet monster takes more damage than its Hits, it dies. At the start of the next episode you can replace it with another appropriate monster, but until then you won't have a monster to use. You can take this feat multiple times, which gives you additional monsters, but you can only command one monster at a time. If you have multiple pet monsters, you can switch between them during interludes as a passive action.

**Pet Pounce (At-Will):** You can command your pet to do an overextended attack that is hard to defend, but which leaves it vulnerable. Your pet must be able to do a close attack; it gets +2 to the attack check, but -2 to its defenses until the start of your next turn.

**Pet Shield (Scene):** Your pet monster trusts you to the point where it will sometimes protect you from harm. When you are about to be attacked, your monster can clash with the attacker, even if you have already used your action for the round.

**Snare (Scene):** You can trap a monster and prevent it from fighting. Make a class attribute check against the monster's Close Defense. If you fail, you are forced into a Clash with the monster. If you succeed, you restrain the monster. It cannot attack, and must use each turn to make an Athletics check (required result of 10 plus your class attribute) to get out.

## Ninja

**Ambush (Scene):** Before an encounter starts, you can try to put yourself into the best possible position for fighting the monsters without getting hurt yourself. Make a Ninja class attribute check against the monsters' highest Cunning. If you succeed, you start the round in Ambush footing.

**Back Attack (At-Will):** You have a knack for hitting enemies from where they're least expecting, hard. If you have Ambush footing, or if your target is in Off-Balance footing, and you successfully attack (but not clash), you cause an additional hit.

**First Strike (Enhancement):** You have a knack for getting in there and taking action before anyone else. When you roll initiative, you may use your Ninja class attribute instead of Athletics if you wish, and you can add a +3 bonus to your result.

**Interrupt (Scene):** Once per encounter, you can whip out a quick attack that stops an attacking monster in its tracks. You must still have an action available. Make a standard attack; if it succeeds, the monster loses its action before it can attack.

**Scout (Enhancement):** You're very good at scouting ahead to see what kind of monsters are around. Add a +3 bonus to scouting checks.

**Slippery (At-Will):** When things get tough, you can make yourself hard to hit. Using this feat counts as your action, but until the start of your next turn, you get a +3 bonus to your defenses.

**Untouchable (Episode):** Sometimes your slippery, defensive mojo just completely clicks. When you use this feat, add your ninja class attribute to your defenses until the end of your next turn.

**What Just Happened? (Episode):** Every now and then you can pull something off that just makes people's jaws drop. You spring into battle and deliver a devastating attack. Make a normal attack or clash, but add +3 to the roll, and it causes an additional 2 hits if it succeeds.

## Popular

**Clout (Episode):** You are sufficiently well-known that you can use your clout around town to solve certain kinds of problems. By using this feat you can take a point of Strain to solve a problem with an authority figure through your influence.

**Come On Guys! (Episode):** You know how to get your friends motivated. If you use this in an encounter, your friends each get a bonus to all checks and defenses equal to your connection rank to them until the start of your next turn. If you use it during an interlude, everyone with whom you have a connection of rank 2 or higher gets a +2 bonus to one check of your choice.

**Composure (At-Will):** You can keep your cool under pressure, up to a point. By taking a point of Strain, you can ignore penalties from Upset status and prevent anyone from spending your Strain for the duration of one check or conflict.

**Prestigious (Enhancement):** You're very respected and well-known, and people tend to want to be your friend. When you make a check to raise a connection's rank, the other person can choose to add your popular class attribute to their result points.

**Read People (Scene):** You know how to read people, and figure out what they're feeling. By either spending someone's point of Strain or taking one yourself, you can have the participant controlling that character briefly explain to you what a character is thinking.

**Sow Discord (Scene):** You know how to mess with people who are getting along. When two characters are making a check relating to each other, you can give one of them a -3 penalty.

**Star Athlete (Enhancement):** You're an athlete, and the pride of your school. +1 to Athletics.

**Use Weakness (At-Will):** You have a certain knack for exploiting people's weaknesses. If you spend someone else's Strain point, they take a total penalty of -3.

## Punk

**Anarchist Cook (Episode):** A lot of punks don't like to play to this stereotype, but you do know enough about homemade explosives to whip up the occasional pipe bomb. Once per episode you can use a homemade bomb against monsters. It's best to avoid using this too much, because the police aren't big fans of such things. Make an attack roll using your Punk class attribute against the monster's Ranged Defense. If you succeed, you cause 3 hits to it.

**I Hear Things (At-Will):** Being so well-connected, you know what's going on around town. By taking a point of Strain you can either ask the GM to come up with a rumor relevant to the story, or create

one yourself.

**I Know People (Episode):** You know all kinds of people who you can talk into lending a hand with things. By using this feat you can get some incidental characters to lend a hand with one thing. Make a class attribute check; for every 5 result points you get one helper. They effectively have attributes of 6, and they each try to help you with one check.

**I'm So Punk (Enhancement):** You know who you are and you don't let anyone tell you differently. Add +1 to your Determination attribute.

**Music (At-Will):** You love music, and it helps keep you motivated, gives a rhythm to your life. By listening to music on a portable player you can get a +1 bonus to all checks, but this prevents you from getting any benefits from your friends' feats or help, or from using any of your own feats that require communicating with others.

**Party Time (Scene):** You know how to lighten the atmosphere and make people around you feel at ease. When you use this feat, everyone with whom you have a connection of at least rank 2 only takes a -2 penalty per rank of Upset status.

**Straight Edge (Scene):** You take pride in knowing who you are and resisting temptation. By using this feat you can ignore a conflict relating to peer pressure.

**Well-Connected (Enhancement):** You know lots of people. You can only take this feat during character creation. You get an extra three ranks to assign to connections, but you can only use these for connections with secondary characters.

## Ranger

**Awareness (Enhancement):** You have an exceptional awareness of what's going on in the battlefield. You receive a special bonus of +2 to your ranged defense.

**Bullseye (Scene):** Every now and then you can line up the perfect shot. Add +4 to an attack or clash roll for a ranged attack.

**Careful Shot (At-Will):** You can stop to take careful aim. Your attack is more likely to hit, but you're more vulnerable. Add +3 to an attack or clash roll for a ranged attack, but take a -3 penalty to your defenses until the start of your next turn.

**Far Shot (Scene):** You can try to get a shot in just before your group is close enough to properly engage the monsters. Before rolling initiative, you can make a basic attack on one target with a ranged weapon, with a -2 penalty.

**Favored Ranged Weapon (Enhancement):** Pick one specific type of ranged weapon (throwing knives, bows, crossbows, throwing axes, shuriken, etc.). Any time you're wielding that type of weapon, add +1 to rolls to attack or clash.

**Painful Shot (At-Will):** This is a shot that hits a vital spot that causes the monster pain that temporarily distracts it. Take a -2 penalty to your attack roll, but if it hits, the monster takes a -2 penalty to all of its actions and defenses until the end of your next turn.

**Pinning Shot (Episode):** You fire a shot that holds a monster fast to the ground, a convenient tree, or some such. Make an attack or clash with your ranged weapon; if it hits, the target is effectively in Off-Balance footing. It cannot make close attacks, though it can do close clashes against hunters making melee attacks with a -2 penalty. A monster can use its turn to try to escape from being pinned by making an Athletics check of 16 or better.

**Rain of Arrows (Episode):** You can fire off several shots at a target. This uses up 1R worth of

ammunition, but you can either get a +6 bonus to your Dexterity check against a single target, or shoot at up to three targets by making an unmodified check for each.

## Weirdo

**By Myself (At-Will):** You're used to residing inside your own head, and you know how to deal with problems without any help. You can use your clique attribute to assist yourself in recovering from Upset or Shaken statuses.

**Creep Out (Scene):** You've acquired a knack for driving people away when you want to. If you use your Weirdo class attribute to drive someone away during a conflict, you get a +2 bonus to the roll, and if it's successful, the opponent cannot escalate.

**Freak Out (At-Will):** Sometimes you just have to let stuff out. By taking a point of Strain you can add your current ranks of Upset status plus 1 to an attack or clash check.

**Independent Thinker (Enhancement):** You have your own way of thinking, and you're hard to sway. Anyone trying to persuade you gets no bonuses from items or feats, and modifiers from connections are reduced by 1.

**Monsters Understand Me (Enhancement):** Although you're not that great with people, you have a certain knack for dealing with monster. +1 to Monster Tamer.

**Nowhere To Be Found (Scene):** You have a way of slipping away when people aren't looking.

**Screw This (Episode):** Sometimes you just blow off your friends to clear your head. Whatever is going on, even during an encounter, using this feat lets you have a "private" interlude where you can take one active action that involves no one else (which usually means recovery).

**Secret World (Episode):** Although you're not very good at dealing with people, you have this hidden side that people find amazing when they finally see it. Once per episode you can reveal something about yourself in order to gain a +5 bonus to a Socialization check.

## Gear

### Weapons

Most monster hunters need some kind of weapon to get by. For the purposes of this game, the weapon rules are pretty simple and abstract (because I hate writing up lists of weapons and such), but you can and should add more detail in the story. Rather than just a "Standard Melee Weapon," tell us how your character has a Nike Cortana that he saved up for, but kind of went out of style like a month after he bought it.

To create a weapon, first pick one of the five basic weapon types, then apply one or more of the modifiers if you wish.

**Improvised Melee Weapon (0R):** Rather than buying a "proper" weapon at a store, you can just use something reasonably offensive found around the house. A lot of casual hunters just bring an aluminum baseball bat or a shovel. +1 hit.

**Small Melee Weapon (1R):** This is a smaller close-combat weapon, such as a knife. It's not nearly as powerful as other kinds of melee weapons, but it's a bit more accurate. A good bowie knife is also handy for retrieving monster parts once a battle is over. No bonus to damage, but +1 to Prowess checks made for using it.

**Standard Melee Weapon (3R):** This is a typical weapon meant for close combat, such as a sword, pole arm, mace, etc. +2 hits.

**Big Melee Weapon (5R):** These are unusually large close combat weapons. They tend to be oversized versions of the Standard Melee Weapons, such as broadswords, huge axes, giant warhammers, etc. +3 hits, but you a -2 penalty to Athletics checks, and a -1 penalty to your defenses while wielding it.

**Small Missile Weapon (2R):** This is a smaller missile weapon such as a short bow or throwing knives. No damage bonus, but you do not take an attack penalty for taking Rear footing. However, for every three Encounters in which you use this weapon, you use up 0.5R worth of ammunition.

**Standard Missile Weapon (4R):** This is a fairly powerful missile weapon such as a full-sized bow. +1 hit, and you do not take an attack penalty for taking Rear footing. However, for every three Encounters in which you use this weapon, you use up 1R worth of ammunition.

**Gimmicky or Fashionable (+2R):** The weapon has some special feature or styling to it that is impressive in a way, but not directly useful in combat. A Gimmicky weapon might have LEDs or a built-in GPS or something, while a fashionable weapon could have a stylish design, an exclusive name brand, etc. In either case, you can add a +2 bonus for appropriate social checks, but this bonus drops to +1 the episode after you buy it, and then disappears the session after that. You can only get a bonus from one Gimmicky or Fashionable item at a time.

**Quality (+3R):** The item is of better than normal quality. Add +1 to checks made to use it.

**Crappy (-1R):** The item is cheaper than usual, but its quality suffers accordingly. It causes one fewer hits (this can go negative), and it just looks cheap.

## Consumables

**Elemental Bit (2R):** This is the slang term for monster parts that unleash a burst of some kind of “element” (fire, ice, electricity, etc.) when they collide with something hard enough. The most common elemental bits are Firethorns (from flamehogs), Ice Shards (from ice stabbers), and Thunderstones (from thunderballs). Make a Dexterity check to attack. If it hits, it causes 2 hits.

**Healing Potion (1R):** A healing potion is a small bottle of a viscous, dark green liquid derived from stumpy leaves. Despite their best efforts to improve the taste, it tastes vile, and most people gag on it the first few times they drink one. But its effects are undeniable; wounds close, and bones mend themselves in seconds. Drinking a potion immediately removes two ranks of Tired status.

**Salamander Crystal (3R):** These orange crystals found in salamanders glow from within. They are similar to elemental bits, but significantly more powerful. You can make a single attack with one; make a Dexterity roll with a +3 bonus (from its area effect) to throw it at your enemy. If it hits, it causes 4 hits.

**Slime Cola (1R for a 12-Pack):** In case you were wondering what Monster Mart does with all the slime cores it buys, this is the answer. Although squishies themselves are among the most toxic of monsters, a very small amount of slime core extract gives people an exceptional energy boost. Monster Mart sells that in the form of “Slime Cola,” a soft drink of sorts, in order to make the taste more bearable. Many monster hunters acquire a taste for it (even though it costs a fortune compared to normal soda), but most people can’t stand it. Drinking one can removes 1 ranks of Tired status. However, it takes a while to drink this stuff. You can only drink one can during an interlude, and it takes two turns to drink a can during an encounter.

## Other Gear

**Alchemy Tools (2R):** Alchemist characters will have to invest in certain materials if they want to use feats like Brew Potion, and especially if they want to get into experimental alchemy. This represents the standard set that Monster Mart sells, and is basically a special chemistry/dissection kit geared towards working with monster parts.

**Clothes (0R):** For this game we'll assume that your characters get clothes from their parents. However, you can buy more interesting clothes by paying for the Gimmicky or Fashionable modifiers from the weapons section if you like.

## Secondary Characters

Secondary characters aren't as important to the story as the protagonists, so the rules for them are a bit less complicated. To make a secondary character, just pick out two cliques (or a clique and a class, if you want them to be a monster hunter), and calculate attributes like usual (class and clique, or the two cliques, start at 5 and 7).

If a secondary character is a hunter, you can assume they have reasonable gear for hunting—a weapon, one or two healing potions, etc.—and where it's absolutely *essential*, one or two feats. This is mainly for Alchemists and Monster Tamers. A Monster Tamer has to have the Pet Monster feat, and an Alchemist should have Brew Potion or something similar to actually be useful.

Regardless, fill in some basic Personal Data, like you would for a protagonist, but without quite as much detail.

### Secondary Character Cliques

Since secondary characters can include adults, and other people who aren't bored teenagers, here are some special cliques. These don't have any feats associated with them.

- **Blue Collar:** This is someone who makes a living through manual labor and stuff that requires working with your hands.
- **Brat:** Younger secondary characters don't have to have this clique—many of the standard ones are fine for making kids—but a “brat” is a kid who generally likes to run around and play and occasionally make life for difficult for others. They often want to hunt monsters, and might even sneak out with a baseball bat to try it out despite their parents' objections.
- **Pro Hunter:** Most monster hunters give up the hobby when they become adults, but a few find some way to make a living from hunting. Some get on monster hunting TV shows like American Monsters or M-Crawl, but most just hunt monsters day in and day out and make enough from trade-ins and such to scrape by. It's not a good way to live, frankly, and while teenage hunters can get by with healing potions and such, for the pros it all takes its toll on the human anatomy in the long term.
- **White Collar:** This is someone who works in an office job or similar, relying on their brains more than their bodies to make a living. These people rarely have time for monster hunting, but hunters can run into them most anywhere.
- **Woodsmen:** A “woodsman” is someone who's big into the great outdoors and possibly game hunting too. Some will happily hunt monsters as well as normal animals, while other people fit this clique more because they're big on hiking.

Clique	Athletics	Determination	Socialization	Arcana	Dexterity	Prowess
Blue Collar	4	3	3	2	2	4
Brat	4	3	3	2	4	2
Pro Hunter	4	3	3	5	4	4
White Collar	2	3	4	3	2	2
Woodsmen	4	3	3	3	4	4

## Incidental Characters

Needless to say, the world has more people in it than the number of participants times two. Your protagonists and secondary characters are meant to simply be the range of people that will be important in the stories you tell through playing the game. You might change the selection of characters, or introduce new secondary characters if you think they'll make things more interesting, but otherwise all of the other potential people are what we call "incidental characters." They're in the background to make the world make sense, and you can even give them names if it comes to it, but unless you want to "promote" one to secondary character status, they don't take part in the story.

The GM always controls incidental characters, though they don't need much controlling in the first place. If you somehow find yourself needing to make a check for an incidental character, either make stats as per a secondary character, or just use 6s for everything. Incidental characters will also often be strangers to the participants' characters, and thus effectively have a connection with a rank of -1.

## Episodes

An “episode” is one session of the game, one instance of you and your friends sitting down to play for a few hours. An episode is divided up into a series of scenes. Usually you’ll alternate between Encounters (scenes where your protagonists fight monsters) and Interludes (which concern recovery and social stuff). Sometimes you can have two scenes of the same type in a row, though this can make things unduly hard or easy for the protagonists. One episode roughly corresponds to one monster hunting run, so it can have something like three to six encounters, with interludes between.

Before we get into how encounters and interludes work, we first need to explain how you get ready to start the game and how to roll dice.

## Preparation

Once you’ve done all of the pre-play stuff, you’re pretty much ready to get your episode under way. This is not the kind of game where the GM has to plan out an adventure for each session. It doesn’t hurt to think about what the various characters want to do before you get started, but you definitely shouldn’t get too attached to anything.

One thing the GM can do to prepare, if you are so inclined, is plant out some encounters. You can just roll for random monsters to throw at the protagonists on the fly, but sometimes it’s fun to plan stuff out and try to come up with something interesting.

## Write Goals

Before you begin each episode proper, each player gets to write up a Goal for his or her protagonist. This is something the protagonist wants to accomplish during that session, and probably something that relates to one or both of his or her issues. A goal should be something you can realistically accomplish during a session, but not something so easy that success is guaranteed. “Get a salamander crystal” is okay and “Ask Rita on a date” is great, but “Kill one squishy” or “Eat a hamburger” are lame. Each player reads his or her goals aloud to the group before you start, and you can take this opportunity to offer suggestions or even objections.

## Checks

A “check” is where you attempt to do something and roll dice to see if you succeed. Except for certain special things, you only make checks as part of Conflicts or Encounters.

To make a check, you roll two six-sided dice, and add up the numbers of the dice and the rank of a particular attribute. In some cases you’ll have to apply modifiers, good or bad. The most common kind of modifiers are penalties from Statuses (see p. XX).

The total amount you get from adding up your die roll, attribute, and modifiers is called your **result points**. When you’re dealing with monsters, there are certain things where characters will have a fixed result rather than rolling; apart from the GM not having to roll dice, things work exactly the same.

If you get a tie, each side rolls a single extra die and adds it to their result to get a clear winner (repeat if necessary).

## Connections

If you have a connection with someone and you’re making a check intended to influence them in some way, add your connection modifier to the number of dice you get to roll. Of course, they get to do the same when they try to influence you.

## Using Strain

Characters pick up points of Strain through all kinds of things, which we'll discuss later. The important thing is, if someone else has a Strain point, you can spend it to give them a -2 penalty to a check. Only one point of Strain can be spent to penalize a given check, though you can penalize multiple checks in a conflict.

When you use someone else's Strain, you're taking unfair advantage of their emotional and physical wear and tear. It's kind of a screwed up thing to do, but people do it all the time because it works.

## Helping

Characters have to make checks on their own, but you can still offer assistance to your friends. If you're the only one trying to give help, you just give the other participant a +2 bonus to the roll and that's that.

If there are multiple helpers, each one after the first has to make a check with an appropriate attribute (usually but not always the same one as the one making the original check) and get a result of at least 7, plus two times the number of prior helpers. If you can pull that off, you get to give the other participant another +2 bonus. If you fail, nothing happens. Other people can continue trying to help after one person fails, but the required result still goes up.

Any time you successfully help (even if the check you're helping with fails), put a check on your connection to the person you helped.

## Bribery

Sometimes it takes more than words to sway someone. Money talks and all that. This rule lets you attempt to use Resources to help you influence someone. You can get a bonus from a Trendy item (see p. XX), but you can also spend Resources directly on the attempt to influence someone. Spending 1R gives you a +1 bonus, and spending 3R gives you a +2 bonus. Anything more than that gets kind of creepy, so the bonus maxes out at +2.

## Conflicts

Sometimes people don't get along, and it's necessary to work out what happens when they clash. In this game a "conflict" is a scene where two or more characters are competing in some way. If you want to do a scene about people where there's no conflict per se, you can do an Interlude instead.

When you have a conflict on your hands, first make it clear what the conflict is about and who exactly is involved. We resolve conflicts with checks, so if there are multiple people on a given side in a conflict, you'll have to pick a representative, and have the others help. Whoever gets the highest result on the check wins the conflict, and gets to assign Consequences (see below) to the loser.

## Escalating

If you didn't like how the first roll turned out, or if you want to press the advantage (and accept the risk that entails) you can escalate. To escalate, you need to make a similar check, but both sides have to use different attributes. You need to be able to justify the new attribute you want to use, which may require changing your strategy. In an argument, you might start out with Socialization, then move on to Determination as you dig in your heels, and finally Prowess if you decide to reduce it to a stupid brawl.

If you didn't escalate, the loser takes consequences. If you did, the loser still takes consequences as usual, but each character takes a point of Strain for each roll that went against them.

## Giving

Sometimes discretion is the better part of valor, and it's better to quit while you're ahead. If there's a tie, or if the other side wants to escalate and you don't like your odds (especially if you don't have any good attributes to use and they do), you can just give in. If you give, you take consequences as usual, but nothing else (no Strain at all). If you give from a tie, you can remove a point of Strain.

## Consequences

When you lose a roll in a conflict, there can be consequences. When you lose the conflict entirely, there are definitely going to be consequences. There are several kinds of consequences, and whoever beat you gets to decide what kind you'll suffer if you lose a conflict.

There are two forms of consequences: Statuses and Concessions. The winner can either try to get a concession from the loser, or assign a Status. The consequences you pick have to be appropriate to the nature of the conflict, and you should be thinking in terms of what will make the game more interesting, rather than what your character wishes would happen.

### Concessions

A concession is where the winner of the conflict asks if the loser is willing to have a certain thing happen in the game's fiction. The loser can negotiate, but the winner cannot force the loser to accept a concession. If you lose a conflict where someone is trying to ask you out on a date, they could ask for you to accept the date as a concession, but they couldn't actually force you to take it. On the other hand, if the winner is taking some consequences too after some escalation, you can change the nature of what's going to happen by getting them to take a concession.

Concessions have the potential to be much more interesting than Statuses, and I strongly encourage you to use them without hesitation. In particular, don't deny someone the chance to get a concession if another status rank will take them out. That's when you have them against the ropes, so it's all the more reason to use the opportunity to do something *interesting*. This goes double when the GM is controlling the monsters.

A concession can be a bit open-ended if you like. Instead of "You trip and fall on your face and look like a doofus in front of Rita", you could just say, "You embarrass yourself in front of Rita", and let the other player figure out how exactly. However, concessions have to affect the actual loser of the conflict; you can't fob your loss off on someone else.

Concessions can affect things on your character sheet when it makes sense to do so, but this is mainly for losing possessions. When assigning consequences for tangling with monsters, the GM might offer to have your weapon get broken or your spiffy new jacket get burned or otherwise ruined.

### Statuses

Unlike concessions, statuses relate to game mechanics. A status is the "stick" the winner of a conflict gets to hold over the head of the loser to get them to make a concession.

There are two kinds of Statuses: Tired and Upset. These are for physical and mental wear and tear, respectively. When you take a rank of one of these statuses, mark the appropriate box on your character sheet. Each status rank gives you a -3 penalty to all mental or physical checks. If your penalty is greater than your actual attribute, you'll be subtracting from whatever you roll on the dice. Accumulating lots of status ranks sucks.

Monsters work a little bit differently. They don't take penalties from Tired status, and they die upon taking as many or more ranks of Tired status as their Hits rating.

## Taken Out

If you fill up all four boxes for either Tired or Upset, you're **taken out**. If it's physical, you're too exhausted and/or hurt to move for the moment.

If you're taken out by Upset status, you're just too freaked out to function properly. You can interpret your character's state how you want, according to whatever happened to cause the statuses, but the point is, your character is too messed up to function, and no amount of persuasion will change that. You can walk and talk, but you're not exactly pleasant to be around, and no one is going to get you to do anything useful until you calm down some. You cannot actually engage in any checks other than for fighting or recovery.

If you're taken out by Tired status, you're too tired to move, and possibly outright unconscious. You cannot participate in encounters, and you can't make any checks other than for recovery during an interlude, until you take off at least one rank of Tired.

## Where's the Role-Playing?!

If you're not used to this style of game, it might seem a little strange to settle an argument by rolling the dice rather than straight-up role-playing. Part of the trick here is that the rules can't actually force your character to do something. They might make it much more desirable, but your character never loses his or her free will to the roll of the dice. The other thing is that you should never actually stop role-playing. The rules here are meant to chuck you into situations where you'll do more role-playing, and definitely not to let you slide by with doing less.

For example, suppose I'm playing Doug and you're playing Jessica. I decide I want to do a scene where Doug asks Jessica out on a date. If you want her to just accept, we'd move on to a connection interlude (see p. XX), but if you want to put up a fight, we'd do a conflict. Supposing I came out on top, I could offer you a concession of having Jessica accept his invitation. You don't have to take that offer, but if you don't I could use my victory points to give you a bunch of Upset status ranks. Since I won the conflict you have an *incentive* for going the way I want, but you can still role-play Jessica however you think is appropriate.

## Encounters

In the course of an episode, the protagonists go through several "encounters" where they find and (usually) fight some monsters. The GM gets to decide what kind of monsters the protagonists are going to fight, either by picking from the book or rolling on the Encounter Table; the Monsters chapter (p. XX) explains this in more detail. In this game the GM plays the part of the monsters. Keep in mind that your goal is to keep things interesting, not to screw over the players.

Note that when people get into a physical altercation, treat it as a basic conflict.

Also, keep in mind that an encounter isn't an excuse to stop role-playing. As with regular conflicts, you can still "role-play along," and use the rules as a source of cues.

### 1. Scouting

If the monster hunters want to find specific types of monsters and/or avoid others, they can do scouting beforehand. This doesn't guarantee anything, but it can definitely help. To scout, one character makes an Arcana check (or possibly with an appropriate class attribute). Only one character can make the scouting check, though others can help. If you can reach the required result as per the table below, you succeed at scouting.

If you find that you don't like the kind of monsters you're facing, you can try to get away from them before they notice you. To do this you need to get a check result that's better than the monster's

Cunning or Pursuit check.

Task	Required Result
Find common monsters (GM rolls on the common monster table)	8
Find a specific type of common monsters	12
Find a specific type of uncommon monsters	16
Find out what kind of monsters are nearest	10

## 2. Monster Knowledge

Characters don't necessarily know about a given monster or how best to fight it. If you haven't encountered a monster before, you can make an Arcana check to see if your character knows about it. You need to get a result equal to or better than the monster's Obscurity rating. If you succeed, the GM will have to show you the monster's full description. Everyone knows about the common monsters (squishies, stumpies, salamanders, shrooms, flamehogs, firebats, shadow dogs, evil eyes, rocktopi, ice stabbers, and doomspiders), but for others you may not know what you're dealing with.

## 3. Choose Footing

When you're preparing for an encounter, each hunter and monster must choose a footing. This is an abstract representation of where your character is on the battlefield, and the kind of tactics he or she will be using. You normally get to choose between Forward, Middle or Rear. You cannot take Rear footing if you're by yourself. Certain Feats will let you take up a special Ambush footing, and certain circumstances will force you into a special Off-Balance footing (which you want to avoid if you can). Forward emphasizes offense at the expense of defense, Rear does the reverse, and Middle is balanced. However, ranged weapons let you ignore the penalty for attacking from the Rear, which is their main virtue.

Footing	Attack	Defense
Forward	+2	-2
Middle	+0	+0
Rear	-2	+2
Ambush	+3	+1
Off-Balance	-3	-2

## 4. Determine Turn Order

Encounters are divided into a series of rounds, during which each character present takes a single turn. Before the first round starts, you need to figure out who is going in what order. For each character, make an athletics check (certain feats can give you bonuses). For the monsters, just make one check for each type of monster present. If there's 6 squishies and 2 stumpies, make one roll for the squishies and one for the stumpies. Don't waste time making a total of 8 rolls to get a separate one for each monster.

Combatants act in order from highest to lowest. If your turn comes up and you don't want to do anything just yet, you can Hold (see below).

## 5. Take Actions

Each character involved in the encounter takes his, her, or its action. There are several possible actions you can take, but you only get to do one per turn. There are certain feats that will let you do certain things without using a turn (like how alchemists can use the Quaff feat to drink a potion without using

a turn), but those are special exceptions. Within reason, you can do things like shout advice or draw weapons without using your turn, but anything more involved—including giving an item to a friend—does use a turn.

### A. Attack

This is your most basic action. You use your weapon (or other means of attacking) to try to hurt the other side. Make a check with Prowess (for a close attack) or Dexterity (for a ranged attack). If you beat the target's close or ranged defense rating, you can cause consequences (usually Tired status). Where people get taken out from 4 ranks of Tired status, monsters have a Hits rating that determines how many it takes to take them out.

Weapons, monsters' special abilities, and certain other things can change the nature of the consequences of a successful Attack (or Clash). Weapons list this in terms of extra hits caused. An unarmed attack causes one hit.

If you're on the receiving end of an Attack and you haven't yet used your turn for this round, you can turn it into a Clash.

### B. Clash

If someone is attacking you and you haven't yet used your turn, you can do a clash against them. The hunter and monster enter into a conflict, and unlike with a basic Attack they can escalate normally. Each side can use whatever kind of attack they wish (close or ranged).

Once the conflict is settled, assign consequences as per an Attack.

With the exception of Off-Balance, footing modifiers do not apply to a clash.

### C. Tactical Action

A "tactical action" is where instead of attacking you try to gain some kind of advantage for yourself and your allies. You normally do a tactical action by making some kind of check, though certain feats let you do the equivalent of a tactical action automatically or with a bonus to the check.

To make a tactical action, first you need to explain what it is your character is trying to do. If no one finds this objectionable—remember that *Slime Story* characters can be talented and clever, but they're still human—you move on to making a check. You'll have to pick out an appropriate attribute—any attribute can potentially be useful, but Arcana, Athletics, and class attributes more so than the rest—and the GM has to come up with an appropriate attribute for the monster to use (typically Athletics or Cunning). If you get more result points than the monster, you'll get an appropriate mechanical effect. If you fail, you will have wasted your turn, but that's all.

Here are some examples, though you can come up with more.

- **Attack Assistance:** This is where you spend your turn doing something that helps one of your allies get in a more powerful attack. If you succeed, one ally gets to add your margin of success to their result points for an attack this round.
- **Confuse:** Characters can try to confuse monsters, to get them to do something stupid. (Monsters aren't sophisticated enough to pull off something like this). If you succeed, the monster loses its next turn, and loses 2 points from its defenses for the rest of this round.
- **Knock Off-Balance:** This lets you get the target into a disadvantageous position, such as being backed against a wall, knocked prone, etc. If you succeed, the target is forced into Off-Balance footing.

- **Weaken:** This is where you attempt to reduce a target's capabilities. If you succeed, you can:
  - Disable one of the target's items, feats, or special abilities. This lasts until either the encounter ends or the target takes a Breather action to get the thing working again.
  - Reduce one of the target's Athletics, Cunning, or Pursuit by your margin of success, plus 1.

#### D. Rescue

If a friend is in trouble, you can step in and try to help them. Like a Clash, you can only do this if you haven't used your turn yet. If you just want to take the brunt of an attack for them, make an Athletics check and add the rank of your connection with them; if you get a better result than the attacker, you take whatever consequences they would have.

Any time you successfully Rescue someone, put two checks on your connection with them.

#### E. Change Footing

If your current footing isn't working for you, you can change to a different footing. You can go into Forward, Middle, or Rear footing with one action.

#### F. Use Item

Unless noted otherwise, using an item takes up one action. This can include drinking a potion, attacking with an elemental bit, etc. Look at the item's description to see how it works.

#### G. Hold

You don't have to jump into things right away. Sometimes it's better to hold off, especially if you want to bring a Clash to bear against whoever attacks. Holding lets you delay your turn until you feel like acting, but you can only directly react by Clashing against someone who is Attacking. Otherwise you will have to wait until after a declared action has taken place to take your action. If you do not use your turn before the end of the round, you lose it.

#### H. Breather

It's hard to recover in the middle of battle, but you can nonetheless give yourself a quick breather. One per encounter you can spend an action on taking a breather and remove one rank of Tired status, or removes the effects of one tactical action.

#### I. Flee

Sometimes you just need to get the hell out of there. If you want to flee from a group of monsters, do a conflict against the monster, normally your Athletics against the monster's Pursuit (monsters don't run away). Apply the defense modifier from your Footing to all checks you make for this conflict. If you win, you get away. If you lose, you take consequences as the monster hounds you. Of course, a lot of monsters are so pitiful at Pursuit that getting away from them isn't a problem.

### 6. New Round

Once all of the combatants have taken their turns, assuming both sides can still put up a fight, start a new round. Each character only gets one try at remembering the details of the monster, and changing footing after the start of an encounter costs an action, so go back to step 3.

### 7A. Victory! Recover Parts

After the characters slay whatever monsters are confronting them, they can try to recover monster

parts. For each monster, the GM will have you roll one die and check the number against the possible results for that monster. For each type of monster present, roll the dice for their parts all at once. If there are seven squishies, roll seven dice, and note down a slime core for each one that comes up as a 4, 5, or 6. Make a note of what parts you've managed to pick up, so you can trade them in later.

## 7B. Hunters Defeated?

This is a game about teenagers hunting cute monsters for spending money. It is not a game about teenagers trying to hunt monsters and getting killed. You could do it that way if you really insist, but it's better for the GM to start extracting harsh concessions so the hunters can escape with their tails between their legs. Don't let them off easy by any means, and feel free to send social consequences their way too. If the protagonists are overwhelmed by what should be relatively weak monsters, have all the other monster hunters in town laugh at them for a while.

## Interludes

The other kind of scene in *Slime Story* is an interlude. This is where you try to do social stuff, trade in items, recover from statuses, and so on. During an interlude, each protagonist can initiate one active action, and can participate in however many passive actions other characters throw at them. Secondary characters can only take one active action per episode. An "active action" is something a character does proactively that takes up a decent amount of time during an interlude. A "passive action" is anything that is either very quick and easy, or for which the character is reacting to someone else's active action.

The limit on active actions is to keep interludes quick and to the point. The GM can let the protagonists have a second consecutive interlude to get things done if it really makes sense given the situation, but players should keep in mind that the protagonists are in an area with wandering monsters, and that time spent yammering or whatever is time not spend killing monsters and making money.

If you're doing an active action, you can bring any other character into the scene. You need to be able to satisfactorily explain why that character is present, but then your protagonists won't be too far apart, and your secondary characters are supposed to be people they'll run into while hunting anyway.

The following things count as an active action during interludes:

- Starting a conflict. This could be an attempt to persuade someone, an out-and-out argument, or even an actual physical confrontation.
- Changing a connection
- Doing a supply run
- Recovery
- Assisting someone else with their Recovery
- Using a feat that is listed as counting as an active action

On the other hand, most other things do not:

- Being pulled into a conflict by someone else
- Helping someone else with a check
- Using an item to remove Tired status
- Role-playing that doesn't involve rolling dice (within reason)

## Changing a Connection

One common thing to do in interludes is changing connections. Usually this means two characters try to get closer together by bonding in some way. If there are sparks flying between two hunters, you might do a scene where they take a break from hunting to talk and be intimate. On the other hand, if a couple's relationship went south and they wanted to separate, they could use this opportunity to try to reduce their connection. In both cases, changing the nature of your relationship with someone isn't so easy that you can do it just by wanting to. It takes some effort to become really intimate with someone, and when you do you can't just forget it out of the blue.

Raising or lowering a connection requires a special check. The characters on both sides of the connection each make a check with an appropriate attribute. Combine their result points; this will determine whether they get the change they wanted.

The following things will affect your total:

- If you're trying to increase the rank of your connection, add the connection's rank to the total.
- If you're trying to lower it, you take that as a penalty.
- If you're trying to raise a connection, you can erase all of the checks on your connection to add that amount to your total. (You get checks from helping, rescuing, etc.)
- If you're trying to raise a connection, you can spend Happiness to improve your chances (before or after you roll), at a rate of 1 Happiness per +1.
- If you're trying to lower a connection, you can spend one of the other person's Strain points to get a +2 to your roll.

Regardless, you can only raise a connection by one rank per episode.

Rank	Description	Required Result to Raise/Lower
-1	Stranger	0
0	Acquaintance	5
1	Casual	10
2		15
3	Close	20
4		25
5	Deep	30
6		35

You normally use Socialization for connection checks, but you can use other attributes sometimes, especially if you're trying to lower a connection. For example, if you have the Weirdo clique, you could use your clique attribute to try to creep your partner out and push them away.

Regardless, if you do raise a connection, both sides get Happiness points equal to its new rank. You may also want to rewrite your descriptions of the connection, especially if the events of the interlude significantly changed the nature of your relationship. Raising a connection from 3 to 4 could very easily change "Good friend who I kind of have a crush on" to "My awesome girlfriend."

You cannot directly force someone to change the connection you share. If you want to raise it and they want to lower it, nothing will come of it. What you *can* do is engage them in a conflict to try to change

their mind, though of course you may just wind up with one of you being upset.

## Recovery

This is where you try to recover from the effects of statuses.

For **Tired** status you pretty much just need to rest and catch your breath. If you sit down and rest a bit, you can automatically remove one rank of Tired status. However, remember that you can recover from Tired status without it being considered an active action with a healing item.

For **Upset** status you have to sit down and clear your head a bit. Other characters can help you to recover if they're willing to use their active action for the interlude, but you have to be using yours for a recovery in the first place. Make a Determination roll; for every 8 result points, you can remove one rank of Upset status. If someone assists you, they can make a Socialization roll with your connection rank as a bonus, and add half their result points to your total. If you assist someone with their recovery, add two checks to your connection. Rolls to recover do not take the usual penalties from statuses, but rolls to assist do.

You can recover from both Tired and Upset with one active action.

## Supply Run

A supply run is where the protagonists go to the local Monster Mart to buy and sell the things they need to hunt. Supply runs can be kind of dull, though you can add more interesting interludes and conflicts relating to each other or the people they meet at the store. Each monster description gives the values of the parts (if any) that hunters can recover from it, and the Gear section lists the costs of different items.

The hunters themselves will have to decide to divvy up the money they get from trade-ins. The most common way to handle this is for everyone who went on the run to take an equal share.

If it's the first or last interlude of the episode, protagonists can do a supply run without it counting as an active action.

## Flashbacks

The stuff that happens during an interlude doesn't necessarily have to take place right then and there. You can have certain things—conflicts, changes to connections, etc.—be flashbacks. This makes it a lot easier to deal with stuff that happens outside of monster hunting runs, but it also makes it a little harder to keep track of everything.

I like players to frame flashbacks as though their protagonists are telling a friend a story. “By the way, did I tell you about what happened with Jessica at Monster Mart last Tuesday?” From there you can do the role-playing and dice rolling for what happened last Tuesday and retroactively apply its effects. Thus, Doug's player could relate how he went into Monster Mart and kissed his girlfriend Jessica, and then he and the participant who plays Jessica could make checks for increasing their connection. Of course, this means you need to be reasonably sure nothing happened during the game so far that would contradict this. If it was already established that Kelly was the only one working there on Tuesday, or that Jessica had broken up with Doug and wasn't speaking to him on Sunday, it could make things kind of weird.

## Finishing Up

There aren't any hard and fast rules for ending an episode, but generally speaking three to five encounters, with enough other scenes around them to be interesting, it about right. Once the protagonists do a supply run to trade in their accumulated parts, you're just about done. However, there are a few things you need to do first.

## Healing

In this game we assume that characters will get some amount of help for whatever statuses they might have suffered during the course of the episode.

You can outright erase all of your Tired status ranks. A good night's sleep will get rid of general fatigue, and your parents won't let you go around injured, especially when a healing potion should get rid of all of it.

Being Upset can stick around a little longer. If you have any left at the end of the episode, make a Determination check. For every 8 result points, remove one rank of Upset status.

## Evaluation

"Evaluation" is where you go around the table and look at everyone's issues and goals. When it's your turn, read off your protagonist's Goal and Issues, and explain why you think he or she achieved that Goal and did something that addressed those Issues. If you achieved your goal, you get 4 Happiness. If you brought an Issue to the fore, you get 2 Happiness. As a rule of thumb, you can get an award for an Issue about people if you change a connection appropriate to that issue, and you can get an award for an Issue about material stuff if you put at least 4R towards that issue in the session. If you have an Issue about wanting a girlfriend, you'd definitely get Happiness if you increase the rank of your connection to a girl you like. If you have an Issue about being obsessed with gadgets, splurging on a new iPhone would qualify you for the reward.

## Resolving Issues

If you accomplish the thing one of your Issues is about, you may treat it as resolved, or let it stay there, depending on whether or not you think it will be relevant. If your issue is "I want a girlfriend," getting a girl to go out with you is the beginning of a journey, not the end, and you could continue writing Goals that relate to your relationship. Remember that having an issue on your character sheet means you're asking your friends to help you tell stories about it. You could replace "I want a girlfriend" with "I hope Jessica doesn't leave me," but then you should expect your protagonist's relationship to have some tensions.

On the other hand, you could resolve a simple material issue ("I want to buy a car") pretty easily by getting enough money together; see p. XX for some guidelines on buying toys.

If everyone agrees that you've resolved an Issue in a positive way, you get a special award of 10 Happiness, and you'll have to come up with a new Issue.

## Reduce Strain

Between sessions characters get rid of *some* of their strain, but not all. Remove half (rounded up) of your current Strain points.

## Advancement

When that's done, you can spend some of your Happiness points to improve your protagonist if you want.

- **Raising an attribute** by one rank costs two times the new rank you'd be getting.
- **Buying a new feat** from your own class/clique costs 6 points for general feats or those.
  - Unless noted otherwise in its description, you can take a given Enhancement or At-Will feat only once, but you can take a Scene or Episode feat a second time, earning your protagonist a second usage of that feat per scene or episode.

- Buying a new feat from another class/cliue costs 9 points. If you don't have the class/cliue attribute, you only get the base 2d6 roll if you try to use a feat that involves rolling with the class or cliue attribute. Read the description carefully before you spend points like this; some feats from other classes are *awesome* to use, and others won't help you much.
- You can **train in a second class or cliue** by spending 12 Happiness. This gives you a class or cliue attribute with a rank of 3. This doesn't net you any feats and doesn't affect your other attributes, but from here you can buy feats and increase the class/cliue attribute rank normally. You can only have one extra class or cliue.

**Secondary characters** also get to improve, but for them it's a lot simpler. Just increase one attribute by one point at the end of each episode.

# Monsters

This chapter covers the various kinds of monsters that hunters can find, and how to use them in the game.

## Common Monsters

For this playtest document I've only included the eleven "common" monsters, on account of I don't want to write up descriptions for the other thirty-some monsters and then have to re-write them to fit with stuff that comes up in playtesting.

Where the standard encounter table gives you a wide variety of monsters, the Common Monster Table serves as a "shortlist" of the most common monsters. You shouldn't use it all the time, but using it fairly often will help make the common monsters as common as they're theoretically meant to be.

Roll (2d6)	Monster	Page
2	Doomspider	
3	Shadow Dog	
4	Firebats	
5	Stumpy	
6	Shroom	
7	Squishy	

Roll (2d6)	Monster	Page
8	Flamehog	
9	Evil Eye	
10	Rocktopus	
11	Salamander	
12	Ice Stabber	

## Monster Descriptions

**Number Appearing:** This is the size of the group the monsters will appear in. This is usually relative to the size of the party (the group of monster hunters).

**Attributes:** Monsters have a set of attributes, similar to characters.

- **Obscurity:** When trying to figure out what a monster is and relevant details about it,
- **Prowess:** The monster's ability to handle itself with close combat.
- **Close Defense:** The difficulty of hitting the monster in close combat. While for people this is always Prowess+7, for monsters it can vary a bit.
- **Dexterity:** The monster's ability to handle itself with ranged combat.
- **Ranged Defense:** The difficulty of hitting the monster in ranged combat. While for people this is always Dexterity+7, for monsters it can vary a bit.
- **Hits:** This is how many ranks of Tired status a monster can withstand before it's taken out. People have a Hits rating of 4, but for monsters it varies.
- **Pursuit:** This represents how hard the monster is to escape from, should the hunters decide to run away from it.
- **Athletics:** The monster's general ability to move around and do physical stuff.
- **Cunning:** Monsters are not intelligent per se, but some of them have more animal cunning than others. If hunters try to make a deceptive tactical action against a monster, they will have to overcome its Cunning.

**Attacks:** This describes the monster's mode(s) of attack. This will include what attribute it uses and any special effects. Attacks cause 1 hit (one rank of Tired status) if they succeed unless noted otherwise.

- **Melee:** This is a basic close combat attack. These normally use a Prowess check.
- **Aura:** An "aura" refers to when the monster is surrounded by something damaging, such as a corona of fire or just a lot of spikes. Rather than an attack in itself, the aura turns any melee Attack into a Clash against it. These use a Prowess check.
- **Blast:** This is a ranged attack of some kind. As with ranged weapons, blast attacks do not take any attack modifiers from footing. These use a Dexterity check.
- **Burst:** This is an attack that affects multiple targets. Each burst attack specifies how many targets it can attack at once. The attacker makes one Dexterity check and every target whose Ranged Defense is less than the monster's result points is affected. It is not possible to clash against a Burst.
- **Entangle:** This is a close attack that makes it harder for the target to move. If it succeeds, the target takes the listed penalty to physical actions until either someone uses an action to help them remove the entanglement, or they make an Athletics check of the required result listed.
- **Tackle:** This is a close attack that will put the target into Off-Balance footing if successful.

**Special:** Certain monsters have special abilities, similar to feats. Here are the special abilities they can have.

- **Huge:** The monster is massive.
- **Reach:** The monster can make attacks that reach considerable distances. It can make attacks as though both it and the target are in Middle footing.

**Parts:** This tells you what parts defeating one of these monsters will yield. Normally you roll a single die to see what each monster yields.

### Doomspider

Hopefully you're not afraid of spiders, because the doomspider is basically a big spider, about 12 to 18 inches across, with a shiny black carapace. Its bite is painful, and the things are surprisingly fast.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+1

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 8, Close Defense 15, Dexterity 7, Ranged Defense 14, Hits 3, Pursuit 12, Athletics 9, Cunning 7

### Attacks:

- **Entangle (Spider Thread):** Doomspiders can shoot their web at close range to immobilize enemies. If this succeeds, the target takes a -5 penalty to physical actions, and needs an Athletics result of 16 or higher to escape without assistance.
- **Melee (Spider Bite):** Doomspiders deliver painful, but thankfully non-poisonous, bites with their fangs.

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-5: Doom Web Gland (1R). 6: Doom Shell (1.5R).

### Firebats

Firebats are pretty aptly named, being bats that are constantly on fire. They're annoying to fight because of how they flutter around and then explode upon dying, and you never actually get anything

for your effort.

**Number Appearing:** 2d6

**Attributes:** Obscurity 4, Prowess 7, Close Defense 14, Dexterity 8, Ranged Defense 16, Hits 1, Pursuit 8, Athletics 8, Cunning 6

**Attacks:**

- **Melee:** Firebats mainly attack by flapping into targets while on fire.
- **Special (Death Pyre):** When a firebat is killed, its remaining flammable stuff combusts all at once. Hunters who kill a firebat at close range need an Athletics (or Ninja class attribute) check result of 9 or higher to avoid taking a rank of Tired status.

**Parts:** None

### Flamehog

A flamehog looks like a wild boar with flaming spikes running down its back. They're not very smart, but they can charge and knock you down.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Attributes:** Obscurity 5, Prowess 7, Close Defense 14, Dexterity 5, Ranged Defense 10, Hits 9, Pursuit 9, Athletics 9, Cunning 8

**Attacks:**

- **Melee (Tusks):** Flamehogs will attempt to gore enemies with their tusks. This is a basic melee attack with no bonuses.
- **Tackle (Fire Charge):** Flamehogs also like to charge into people to knock them down. This means getting singed and poked with their fire and spikes too.

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Firethorn (0.5R). This is an elemental bit.

### Evil Eye

As you might imagine, an evil eye looks like a big floating eyeball. It attacks by emitting some kind of low-frequency vibration that people and most other organisms find intensely painful.

**Number Appearing:** 1d3

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 6, Close Defense 14, Dexterity 7, Ranged Defense 15, Hits 2, Pursuit 7, Athletics 7, Cunning 7

**Attacks:**

- **Burst (Evil Vibration):** The eye emits a painful low-frequency vibration. This is a basic Dexterity-based attack against all of the people participating in the encounter.

**Parts:** 1: Nothing, 2-6: Eye Gel (1R). This is a gelatinous substance used for certain industrial and alchemical purposes.

### Ice Stabber

Ice stabbers are strange, scuttling creatures with outer shells made of ice that, while they're still alive, stays cold in all but the hottest sun. They have two great ice-spikes that they try to stab you with, hence the name. The cold comes from the "ice shard" inside of them.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 9, Close Defense 16, Dexterity 8, Ranged Defense 15, Hits 4, Pursuit 10, Athletics 10, Cunning 6

**Attacks:**

- **Aura (Ice Mist):** Ice stabbers can emit icy vapors that are painfully cold. An ice stabber must spend a turn to activate this, and it will last until the end of its next turn, after which it can no longer use the power during that encounter.
- **Melee (Ice Pincers):** Ice stabbers' main mode of attack is to pinch with their cold, sharp claws. This is a basic Prowess-based attack.

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Ice Shard (0.5R). This is an elemental bit.

### Rocktopus

The rocktopus is a little reddish-orange octopus-like creature that swallows and spits rocks with surprising accuracy.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+1

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 8, Close Defense 15, Dexterity 9, Ranged Defense 17, Hits 3, Pursuit 8, Athletics 8, Cunning 6

**Attacks:**

- **Blast (Spit Rocks):** Rocktopi attack by spitting rocks. This is a dexterity-based attack that does 1 hit.

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-6: Rock Calamari (0.5R). The oils in rocktopus flesh are used as an industrial lubricant.

### Salamander

Salamanders are less like the little amphibians and more like the fire creatures of myth. They have arms, but no legs, and they're quick, clever creatures in battle. However, they almost always contain salamander crystals, which are both a potent weapon and a valuable part.

**Number Appearing:** One or Two

**Attributes:** Obscurity 6, Prowess 12, Close Defense 17, Dexterity 8, Ranged Defense 15, Hits 12, Pursuit 6, Athletics 9, Cunning 10

**Attacks:**

- **Aura (On Fire):** The most annoying thing about salamanders is that they're always on fire.
- **Melee (Bite):** Salamanders have sharp teeth and their bites are vicious and painful. This is a basic Prowess-based attack, but it causes 2 hits.
- **Tackle (Tail Swipe):** Salamanders can swipe with their tails to knock enemies over. This is a Prowess-based attack.

**Parts:** 1: Nothing. 2-6: Salamander Crystal (2R).

### Shadow Dog

Whatever your opinion of dogs, you probably won't like shadow dogs. They are inky black, to the point where it's hard to discern their features, and they seem to have some kind of black mist wafting off of them. Science explains this as an oily and mildly toxic substance they secrete from their skin, but some people think of them as "shadow elemental" creatures anyway. They are quick and cunning

creatures, and not to be taken lightly.

**Number Appearing:** 1 or 2

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 10, Close Defense 17, Dexterity 8, Ranged Defense 15, Hits 5, Pursuit 12, Athletics 10, Cunning 9

**Attacks:**

- **Burst (Shadow Howl):** Shadow dogs can unleash a howl that sends out a wave of cold, black wind. This can affect up to three targets that are not in Far or Ambush footing.
- **Melee (Bite):** Shadow dogs are also into biting people.

**Parts:** 1-2: Nothing. 3-6: Shadow Blob (0.5R). This is an elemental bit.

### Shroom

Shrooms are big mushrooms, about a foot or two tall, that hop around. They're only slightly more dangerous than squishies, so not very.

**Number Appearing:** 1d6+3

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 7, Close Defense 12, Dexterity 6, Ranged Defense 12, Hits 2, Pursuit 5, Athletics 5, Cunning 4

**Attacks:**

- **Melee:** Like squishies, shrooms sort of throw themselves against you. This is a basic Prowess-based attack.

**Parts:** 1-2: None, 3-6: Shroom Spores (0.3R).

### Squishy

Squishies are probably the most common type of monster, and the most trivial. They appear to be little dollops of red, green, blue, or orange gelatin, about 4 to 18 inches across, with two little black dots for eyes. Squishies do attack, but an individual one can't muster much more than the force of a light punch.

They are the only monster that is known to reproduce, and they do so by binary fission (i.e. they split into two). They are basically very large single-celled organisms, and they're detritovores, feeding mostly on dead leaves and such. There are rumors of squishies of other colors, and of squishies that exhibit more sophisticated behavior, but none of these have been substantiated.

**Behavior:** Squishies are very simple creatures. They can recognize other squishies as friendly (owing to a particular chemical they secrete), but otherwise they instinctively throw themselves at anything that moves.

**Number Appearing:** 2d6.

**Attributes:** Obscurity 0, Prowess 5, Close Defense 10, Dexterity 4, Ranged Defense 12, Hits 1, Pursuit 4, Athletics 5, Cunning 3

**Attacks:**

- **Melee:** Squishies can throw themselves at hunters with the force of a light punch. This is a basic Prowess attack with no bonuses.

**Parts:** 1-2 Nothing. 3-6: Slime Core (0.1R). This is a ball with a viscous goo inside, and easy to break. It is only useful as an ingredient or for trade-in.

## Other Monsters

Here's a list of other monsters I'm contemplating including:

**Uncommon Monsters:** Bigslime, Blubber Hulk, Cactaun, Carnivorous Flying Squirrel, Clamera, Coily, Death Donut, Egger, Evil Sheet, Eyeblob, Flutterby, Glow Worm, Heavybug, Hungry Eye, Jewelcrab, Landshark, Lashtree, Mandragora, Oil Spill, Pobobo, Poker, Rock Turtle, Running Water, Scarfish, Scarab, Shork, Skyfish, Spiky, Slithery, Snapdagon, Spike Snail, Squerb, Stabby, Thunderball, Underminer, Vamp-Vine, Violet Worm, Wyvern, Zapcat

**Hazardous Monsters:** Crystal Siren, Jupiter Flytrap, Manglerfish, Squishy Horde, Vorpall Bunny, Warg

**Dangerous Monsters:** Arborgeddon, Dragon, Elohim, Kumongus, Meteor Monster